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Horace Mann Awards for Teaching Excellence winners announced

November 6, 2023

The NEA Foundation has announced the five winners of the 2024 Horace Mann Awards for Teaching Excellence, one of public education's top honors.

They are:

- Seth Brady, a social studies educator at Naperville Central High School in Naperville, Ill., nominated by the Illinois Education Association.
- Harlee Harvey, a K-8 educator at Tikigaq School in Point Hope, Alaska, nominated by NEA-Alaska.
- Carol Pierobon Hofer, an English as a New Language educator at Fox Hill Elementary School in Indianapolis, Ind., nominated by the Indiana State Teachers Association.
- Kimberly Johnson, an interventionist and resource educator at Auburn Junior High School in Auburn, Ala., nominated by the Alabama Education Association.
- Louise Smith, a band director at Gautier Middle School, Miss., nominated by the Mississippi Association of Educators.

An expert panel evaluates and selects awardees based on their exceptional skill in the classroom, attention to equity and diversity, engagement of families and communities, commitment to ongoing professional development, and advocacy for the profession. They will be honored at The NEA Foundation's Salute to Excellence in Education celebration next year.

"The Horace Mann Awards for Teaching Excellence winners exemplify what it means to be dedicated to your craft, and we are inspired by the passion of these individuals," said Marita Zuraitis, president of the Horace Mann Educators Foundation board of directors.

**2024 HORACE MANN
AWARDS FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE
RECIPIENTS**

Winner	Location
Seth Brady	Naperville, Ill.
Harlee Harvey	Point Hope, Alaska
Carol Pierobon Hofer	Indianapolis, Ind.
Kimberly Johnson	Auburn, Ala.
Louise Smith	Gautier, Miss.

Horace Mann publishes first TCFD Index

October 11, 2023

Horace Mann has aligned its ESG and financial reporting disclosures with the Task Force for Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) standards for the first time.

The index is now available at csr.horacemann.com/tcfd.

“As an insurer, investor, employer and corporate citizen, Horace Mann continually works to better understand and manage climate risks that directly affect the insurance industry, as well as our customers, insurance products and portfolio of investments,” said Don Carley, Horace Mann Executive Vice President and General Counsel. “TCFD is a valuable resource to evaluate companies’ practices as they relate to climate on a consistent basis, and we look forward to expanding these disclosures in the future.”



Solar panels on the roof of Horace Mann’s headquarters building in Springfield, Ill.

Teacher Support Network addresses educators' out-of-pocket spending

June 14, 2023

[Watch how the Teacher Support Network works](#)

Public school teachers in Madison, Wisc., spend an average of \$750 of their own money each year on classroom supplies and necessities for their students.

“Teachers are under an incredible amount of pressure to support the whole child,” said Laurie Stensland of the Madison Public Schools Foundation. “If their kids need something, they’re going to get it – that’s the beauty of teachers.”

To help alleviate this financial burden on educators and support students in need, the Foundation created the [Teacher Support Network](#), which provides each school in the Madison Metropolitan School District with a need-based budget, access to an online shopping portal, and fast delivery of high-quality supplies direct to schools from a local vendor. This “right on time” model increases donation efficiency by providing for very specific needs when they are needed, as opposed to traditional school supply drives that are more broad-based.

The Horace Mann Educators Foundation has contributed \$20,000 to the Teacher Support Network for each of the past two years to support educators and students across the district.

“It’s such a relief for teachers ... to say you don’t have to reach into your pocket, we’ve got it,” said school social worker Betsy Scholz. “I think that’s just very respectful of teachers as professionals.”



Horace Mann formalizes DEI strategy statement

June 8, 2023

Horace Mann formally adopted a [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy Statement](#) this month. It reiterates Horace Mann's commitment to embracing differences and "integrating DEI in everything we do — from how we serve our educator market to how we build our workforce, practices, and processes."

"Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion has long been a part of Horace Mann's day-to-day operations as well as our long-term strategy," said CHRO Jenny Thayer. "This step formalizes those commitments and makes it easily available to all our stakeholders. As a company, we will use the statement to align our goals and initiatives in talent attraction and workforce development, employee experience, education and cultural competence, and building community connections."



Nation's top educators honored by Horace Mann

May 30, 2023

[Watch video here.](#)

As dean of students and restorative justice facilitator at Wyandotte High School in Kansas, Natalie Johnson-Berry is in a unique position to work with and advocate for students who feel they aren't being seen.

One community-building activity has students share positive statements about themselves and have others repeat those statements back to them.

"The goal is to get people to recognize their power," Johnson-Berry said. "I believe if you put things out there, you're going to start to internalize that. Part two of that is having the person affirm you. It's about seeing each other as fellow humans."

This month, Johnson-Berry was awarded the NEA Foundation Member Benefits Award, one of the nation's top honors for public educators. She and four other educators were honored with Horace Mann Awards for Teaching Excellence at the NEA Foundation's Salute to Education Gala. The awards are sponsored by the Horace Mann Educators Foundation, which aims to recognize the dedication of the nation's educators to helping every student reach their full potential.

Johnson-Berry said she was inspired to become an educator by teachers who helped her as a bullied high school student.

"Those teachers, they changed something in me, they made me believe that I could be someone," she said. "That's what led me to fight for the rights of other students who feel like they're not seen, like me. I am pursuing a doctorate degree and it's because education is vital. It can free you."

Other Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence winners included:

[Stephanie Ballard](#), South Dakota | [Kevin Gallagher](#), Pennsylvania | [Theresa Maughan](#), New Jersey | [Lee Perez](#), Nebraska



Lee Perez, Natalie Johnson-Berry, Horace Mann CFO Bret Conklin, NEA Foundation President & CEO Sara Sneed, Horace Mann National Business Solutions Executive Kelly Ruwe, Theresa Maughan and Kevin Gallagher at the NEA Foundation Salute to Education Gala.

Victor P. Fetter and Dr. Aaliyah A. Samuel join Board of Directors

May 25, 2023

Horace Mann announced the election of Victor P. Fetter and Dr. Aaliyah A. Samuel to its [Board of Directors](#)

“Horace Mann will greatly benefit from our new Board members’ expertise as we leverage our leadership position in the education space to gain a larger share of the educator market,” Horace Mann President & CEO Marita Zuraitis said. “As our designated technology liaison, Victor will provide guidance drawing from his extensive experience in digital transformation, cybersecurity and technology risk management. As a recognized thought leader in U.S. educational policy and practice, Aaliyah will provide valuable insight into our core public educator market and how we can best meet their needs in a post-pandemic environment.”

Fetter is the Global Chief Information Officer of Fortive, a global provider of essential technologies for connected workflow solutions. He previously served as Chief Digital Officer at Vertiv, Chief Information Officer at LPL Financial and Dell’s online division. He will serve on the Board’s Audit Committee.

Samuel is President and Chief Executive Officer of CASEL, a nonprofit educational organization. She also serves as a Senior Fellow at the “Center on the Developing Child” at Harvard University, an early childhood research center. She previously served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Local, State and National Engagement at the U.S. Department of Education. She will serve on the Board’s Investment & Finance Committee.



Victor P. Fetter, Aaliyah A. Samuel

Horace Mann honors top local educators

May 5, 2023



Fourth-grade teacher Kathy Fox is congratulated by Horace Mann agent Katie Hageman and Springfield Public Schools District 186 superintendent Jennifer Gill after being named Educator of the Year.

Horace Mann helped honor the top educators in its headquarters location of Springfield, Ill., this Teacher Appreciation Week.

Kathy Fox, a fourth-grade teacher at Fairview Elementary School, was named Springfield Public Schools Educator of the Year. Her nominator said her connection with students transcends their time in her class.

“She shows them that she cares about them as people, as human beings,” the nominator said. “She shows them not all successes in school are about grades – and because she’s able to portray that to the student, they in turn improve academically, emotionally and socially.”

Alicia Miller, assistant principal at Lanphier High School, was named Administrator of the Year. Elizabeth Gilmore, fourth-grade teacher at Matheny-Withrow Elementary School; Trisha Iaiennaro, Spanish teacher at Lanphier High School; and Stefanie Midiri, fourth-grade teachers at Marsh Elementary School, were named the district’s “Rising Stars.”

Social-emotional learning curriculum helps students adjust

April 19, 2023



The 22 first graders in Ashley Barham’s classroom aren’t used to being so close to other students. In fact, they aren’t used to being around other students at all.

With much of their kindergarten and first-grade years confined to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were gaps in students’ social-emotional learning, like emotion management and decision-making, compared to previous classes.

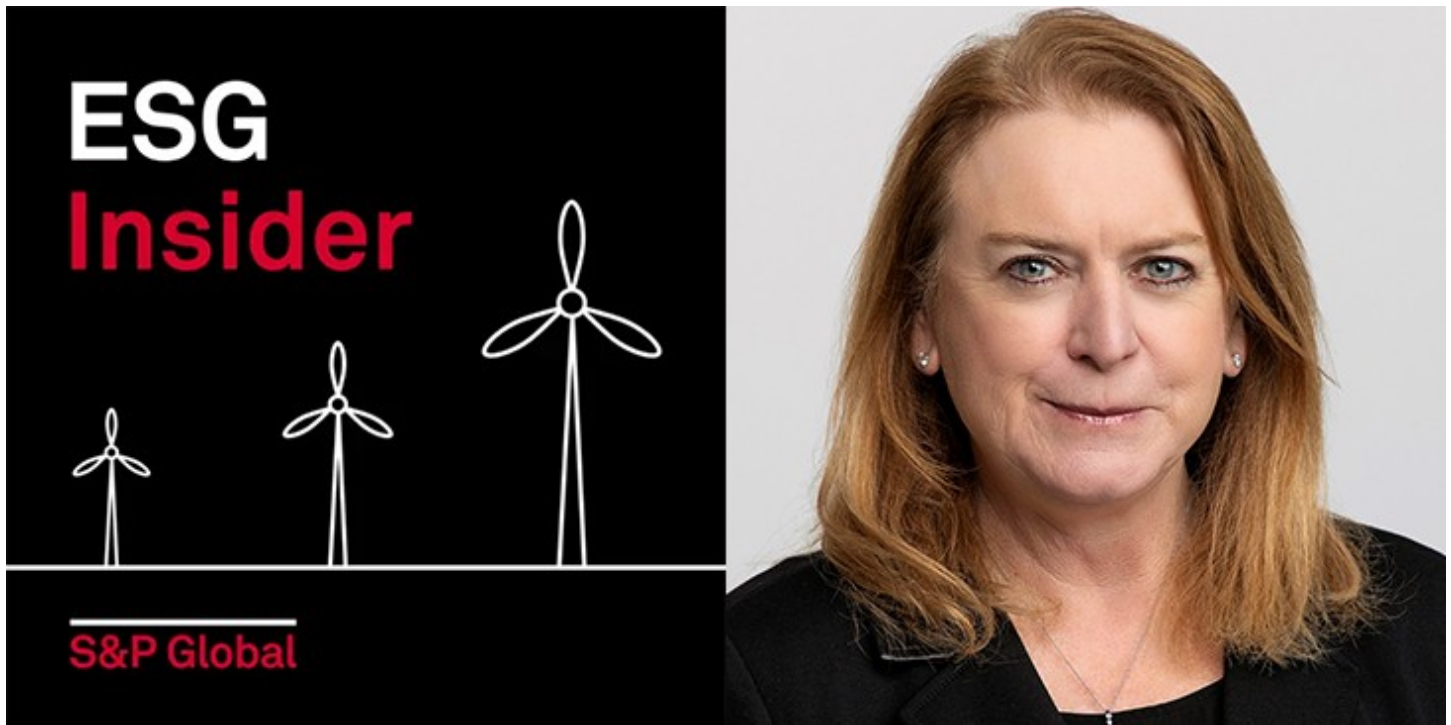
“Learning on Zoom did not prepare them for what regular school, regular friendships and learning looks like,” said Barham, a teacher at Butler Elementary School in Springfield, Ill.

When students returned to classrooms full-time, all elementary and middle school teachers in Springfield Public Schools had access to the Second Step social-emotional digital learning curriculum, funded by the Horace Mann Educators Foundation. The program has grade-specific lessons and gives teachers and students a shared vocabulary to discuss emotions, conflict and cooperation.

“I’m optimistic,” Barham said. “Every day we practice these skills, and hold them accountable to be successful, respectful and responsible humans.”

Horace Mann CEO talks DEI on ESG Insider podcast

March 16, 2023



Horace Mann President & CEO Marita Zuraitis recently talked to S&P Global's [ESG Insider podcast](#) about her experience in the insurance industry, the unconscious bias she encountered on her path to the C-suite, and how Horace Mann promotes diversity, equity and inclusion.

You can listen to the podcast on [S&P Global's site](#).

‘We Read Together’ program expands

March 14, 2023



The choice for Richardson Independent School District students was a tough one.

A colorful vending machine showcased their options: Books about animals, families, zombies — and more than one novel centered on normal kids with secret superpowers.

As part of the [Richardson ISD Foundation](#)’s “We Read Together” program, students each got to pick a book of their own to take home.

“Every kid’s eyes lit up,” said Horace Mann Vice President Thomas Kammerer, who helped students make their decisions.

The program at the Dallas-area district aims to address early literacy learning gaps before children reach third grade. It provides students with books, literacy games and one-on-one mentors. A recent contribution from the Horace Mann Educators Foundation will fund these resources for 300 more students in 12 elementary schools.

“Literacy is the gate to all things,” said Carrie Saunders, Richardson ISD director of community engagement. “Every single content area, you use the skill of reading. So it’s vital that we come in and make the impact early, so they can be successful for years to come.”

Horace Mann honors women educational leaders

March 8, 2023



Horace Mann's Kelly Ruwe (center) congratulates AASA Women in School Leadership Award finalists Tiffany Anderson, Carrie Chiappetta, CheyAnne Fant and Monica Goldson.

Horace Mann honored several outstanding school leaders at the National Conference on Education, hosted by [AASA, The School Superintendents Association](#).

Horace Mann National Business Solutions Executive Kelly Ruwe announced the winners of the AASA Women in School Leadership Awards at the event:

- **Superintendent Award:** Tiffany Anderson, superintendent of Topeka (Kan.) Public Schools
- **Central Office/Principal Award:** CheyAnne Fant, district director of nutrition services and afterschool programs, Barren County (Ky.) Schools

Finalists were Monica Goldson, chief executive officer, Prince George's County Public Schools, Upper Marlboro, Md.; and Carrie Chiappetta, assistant superintendent, Pomperaug Regional School District 15, Middlebury, Conn.

AASA's Women in School Leadership group aims to create more pathways for talented women who wish to further their professional development and grow their careers. The Women in School Leadership awards, sponsored by Horace Mann, support this goal by highlighting outstanding female role models.

Horace Mann named to Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index for fifth consecutive year

January 31, 2023



Horace Mann is one of 484 companies worldwide named to the 2023 [Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index](#).

The reference index recognizes corporate commitment to gender equality and transparency in gender data reporting. It measures gender equality across five pillars: leadership and talent pipeline, equal pay and gender pay parity, inclusive culture, anti-sexual harassment policies, and external brand. Horace Mann has been included in the index since its inception in 2019.

“We strive to nurture an inclusive corporate culture where every employee feels heard, respected and appreciated,” said Horace Mann President and CEO Marita Zuraitis. “We are proud to be recognized for this commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion for the fifth consecutive year.”