



Press Release

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'High-caliber, Inspiring' Rochester Educator Named 2019-20 Michigan Teacher of the Year

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ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich. – Stoney Creek High School's Cara Lougheed (pronounced: LAW-heed) has taught thousands of students; mentored numerous future teachers; and inspired her colleagues for more than two decades throughout Rochester Community Schools and Oakland County.

Today, Lougheed's impact and reach spread exponentially across the state when she was named the 2019-20 Michigan Teacher of the Year (MTOY).

Lougheed learned of her once-in-a-lifetime honor, awarded by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), from Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles during a surprise, all-school assembly.

"Ms. Lougheed has an incredible ability to forge meaningful relationships with those around her, whether it's students in her English class, or college students she's mentoring to become our next generation of educators," Alles said. "She cares about their long-term success, both inside and outside the classroom, and provides them with the tools necessary to be lifelong learners. She is an inspirational educator who truly embodies what it means to put students first."

Governor Gretchen Whitmer offered that, "Ms. Lougheed has dedicated her life to helping our students get ahead. Throughout her more than two decades of teaching, she has touched countless lives and inspired her students and colleagues. Michigan is a great state because of the dedicated teachers like Cara who work tirelessly to make sure their students get a great public education. I'm proud to congratulate her on her outstanding service to our state, and am committed to making sure Cara and teachers everywhere are treated with the respect they deserve."

Lougheed began her teaching career at Rochester High School in 1998 and was a founding staff member of Stoney Creek High School when it opened in the fall of 2001. Lougheed is a Western Michigan University alumnus, with a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education, and also a graduate of Nova Southeastern University, where she earned a Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning.

Outside of the classroom, Lougheed has served as a Social Studies teacher leader, building activities director, district union representative, and a National Education Association delegate. She has worked collaboratively with colleagues and administrators to write curriculum, design an attendance incentive program for students, and contribute to various projects aimed at increasing student connectedness and improving school culture.

Lougheed's selection as the 2019-20 MTOY comes after a months-long, multi-level competitive process. She was one of more than 400 teachers nominated for the award in the fall of 2018. The field was narrowed twice and Lougheed was named one of the state's 10 [Regional Teachers of the Year \(RTOY\)](#) in April. Of the 10 finalists, Lougheed was chosen to receive the state's top honors.

As MTOY, Lougheed will lead Michigan's Teacher Leadership Advisory Committee (MTLAC), which is comprised of the year's RTOY cohort. During their year of service, the group works directly with the MDE and other Michigan educational stakeholders to find solutions to issues facing the state's education system, ensuring that the voice of teachers is present in these discussions.

In addition, Lougheed will serve as an advocate and spokesperson for more than 100,000 teachers statewide and engage in discussions on how best to move Michigan's education system forward – with a non-voting seat at monthly State Board of Education meetings, and a member of the newly-formed Governor's Educator Advisory Council. Lougheed also is the state's candidate for the prestigious National Teacher of the Year honor.

Program expenses for the Michigan Teacher of the Year, as well as the Regional Teachers of the Year and Michigan Teacher Leadership Advisory Council, are covered through the generous support of the Meemic Foundation, now celebrating its 13th year as the program's sponsor. Meemic also presents each RTOY's school with a plaque commemorating the outstanding accomplishment of their teacher.

"Today's announcement marks the beginning of a year-long journey of learning, leading and collaboration for Cara Lougheed and Meemic Insurance Company is honored to be a part of it," said Pamela R. Harlin, Director of the Meemic Foundation. "We are proud of the transformational and inspiring work being done by Cara and the Regional Teachers of the Year, as well as countless teachers in classrooms across the state. Michigan's hard-working educators are changing lives every day and their contributions to our schools, communities, and state as a whole, deserve to be recognized time and again."

Cultivating recognition programs and other educator recognition initiatives is an important part of MDE's efforts to develop, support and sustain a high-quality, prepared, and collaborative education workforce – part of the department's collective goal to make Michigan a Top 10 education state in 10 years.

Lougheed, along with the nine other Regional Teachers of the Year, will be recognized formally by the State Board of Education during its August 13 meeting in Lansing. To learn more about the MTOY program, the MTLAC, and MDE's other educator recognition efforts, visit: bit.ly/MDE_Recognition.

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