

PhysTEC Recognizes Outstanding High School Physics Teachers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nationwide physics teacher preparation network recognizes outstanding physics teachers across the country.

The Physics Teacher Education Coalition (PhysTEC) recently announced the creation of a new award program, PhysTEC Teacher of the Year. This award is designed to highlight the impact of recent graduates from physics teacher preparation programs in the classroom. Each of the winners was nominated by the PhysTEC member institution from which they graduated or received their teaching credentials. One national winner and several local winners were selected.

The National PhysTEC Teacher of the Year is Alexandra (Solender) Boyd from Elon University who is currently teaching at Holly Springs High School in Holly Springs, North Carolina. In her 5 years at Holly Springs, Boyd has increased physics class offerings from 3 to 7 sections per year, increased AP class enrollment and sections, as well as increased female student enrollment from 20% to 50%. She advises the Science Olympiad and the Science National Honor Society. Outside of the classroom, Boyd held an internship at Statistical and Applied Mathematical Sciences Institute through a Kenan Fellowship and was selected to work at SAS to produce activities for Curriculum Pathways, creating new resources for physics classrooms.

Boyd will receive a certificate of recognition from PhysTEC, funding to attend two professional physics conferences focused on teaching and teacher preparation, as well as a classroom materials grant of \$1000.

The local PhysTEC Teachers of the Year will receive a certificate of recognition as well as official acknowledgement to their school administrators and local press. These winners are:

- Reed Anderson, Juab High School, Graduate of Brigham Young University
- Zachary Armstrong, Greeley West High School, Graduate of University of Northern Colorado
- Geoffrey Hart, William P. Clements High School, Graduate of University of Houston
- Zachary Kovach, La Joya High School, Graduate of Arizona State University
- Paul Lee, Howard County Public Schools, Graduate of Towson University
- Elizabeth Rachford, Druid Hills High School, Georgia State University
- Tiffany Taylor, Rogers Heritage High School, Graduate of University of Arkansas
- Danielle Tinkham, Somerset Berkley Regional High School, Graduate of University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
- Richard Wright, St. Andrew's Upper School, UTeach at the University of Texas at Austin

PhysTEC, led by the American Physical Society and the American Association of Physics Teachers, congratulates these outstanding professionals for their contributions to their schools and the physics community.

The United States has a severe, long-term shortage of qualified physics teachers. In 2013 the National Task Force on Teacher Education in Physics reported, “the need for qualified teachers is greater now than at any previous time in history.” Of the approximately 1400 new teachers who are hired to teach physics each year, only 35% have a major in physics or physics education.

PhysTEC aims to improve the education of future physics teachers by transforming physics departments, creating successful models for physics teacher education programs, and disseminating best practices. The project has supported more than 40 sites to build physics teacher education programs and established a national coalition of over 300 institutions committed to improving physics teacher preparation (see www.phystec.org for more details).

The PhysTEC project receives funding from the National Science Foundation and the APS Campaign for the 21st Century and is led by the APS in partnership with the American Association of Physics Teachers. For more information, contact [Monica Plisch](#), Director of PhysTEC and APS Director of Education and Diversity.

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About AAPT

The American Association of Physics Teachers (www.aapt.org) is a non-profit membership organization working to enhance the understanding and appreciation of physics through teaching. The AAPT supports the physics education community through peer-reviewed journals, summer and winter meetings, advocacy, and programs. The AAPT represents over 8,000 physics educators from around the world, primarily from institutions of secondary and higher education. Society headquarters are located in College Park, MD.

About APS

The American Physical Society (www.aps.org) is a non-profit membership organization working to advance and diffuse the knowledge of physics through its outstanding research journals, scientific meetings, and education, outreach, advocacy and international activities. APS represents over 50,000 members, including physicists in academia, national laboratories and industry in the United States and throughout the world. Society offices are located in College Park, MD (Headquarters), Ridge, NY, and Washington, DC.