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Regional Teachers of the Year Announced

La Joya ISD and Sharyland ISD Educators Take Top Honors

In a year of firsts, Region One ESC held its first-ever virtual celebration of the region's most celebrated teachers at its Annual Regional Teacher of the Year event held on August 18, 2020. In all, 46 educators representing 25 school districts were recognized as their district's teacher of the year nominee. As each nominee was announced, the Zoom screen showed the over 100 attendees sending in words of encouragement via the chat line, or un-muting and shouting out their congratulations. At the end of the evening, Carlina Capelo-Pichardo (La Joya ISD) and Michele Galvan (Sharyland ISD) were named the Regional Elementary and Regional Secondary Teachers of the year, respectively.

Carlina Capelo-Pichardo is an Elementary Gifted & Talented teacher at Narciso G. Cavazos Elementary at La Joya ISD. She is a 19-year teaching veteran. After earning a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Business Administration in International Business, her first career was in international business at maquiladora in Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Capelo-Pichardo says she switched careers to education after realizing she wanted a career where she could teach, inspire and make a difference in children's lives.

What motivates Capelo-Pichardo is her belief that students should be curious, creative, tenacious, and productive citizens, as she writes in her nominee essay, "Students should be confident to ask questions and understand that no matter how young they are, they have a voice to make a positive impact in their community."

Michele Galvan is an 8th grade English Language Arts/Reading teacher at B.L. Gray Junior High School at Sharyland ISD. She is a 26-year teaching veteran and recalls wanting to pursue a career in education "to make a difference for any student who would otherwise be "lost" or "unnoticed," for the student struggling to fit in." Through a creative approach to teaching poetry, Galvan found an outlet for exactly those types of students who needed someone to hear them.

"Poetry is not exclusive; it is inclusive. It cares not about your race or religion. It matters not if you are rich, or impoverished. Poetry is for everyone! I knew many students had a negative bias about poetry, so I tried to make it engaging; I attempted to help them connect to it. They

Region One Education Service Center (www.esc1.net) serves over 439,000 students and educators in eight counties in south Texas including Brooks, Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Starr, Webb, Willacy and Zapata counties. Region One works to assist school districts in improving student performance, assist districts to operate more efficiently and economically, and implement initiatives assigned by the legislature or the Commissioner of Education.

became poets! I wholeheartedly believe that it is my job to lay a firm foundation and then see where it takes my students. Some may need a little bit more support than others, so I may need to provide a foothold, here or there, but I want the building to be theirs.”

Each district teacher of the year nominee received a commemorative silver apple for their achievement. Regional Teacher of the Year recipients received the silver apple and a *Star Polisher Award* a statue of four children, hands held high, holding a star. From Jostens, *The Class Ring Company*, the regional Teachers of the Year received a personalized *Teacher of the Year* ring. This is the 10th year that Jostens, *The Class Ring Company* has served as a sponsor of the Region One Teacher of the Year celebration.

Districts Teachers of the Year are nominated by their school districts and must submit an application consisting of essay questions requiring nominees to describe a lesson or unit that defines them as a teacher, describe a project or initiative that has contributed to the improvement of overall school culture, an explanation of how they ensure that education transcends the classroom, what they consider to be a major public education issue, and finally, as a spokesperson for teachers and students what is their message to the profession and to the public. A committee comprised of representatives from various teacher and administrator groups evaluated the essay applications.

Each of the state’s twenty regional education service centers submit their regional elementary and secondary teachers of the year for the Texas Teacher of the Year award; Region One ESC will nominate Capelo-Pichardo and Galvan for the Texas Teacher of the Year award. Semi-finalist judging will take place at the Texas Association of School Administrators headquarters in Austin, Texas to determine the six Texas Teacher of the Year finalists. Finalists will be announced in early September.

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**Regional Elementary
Teacher of the Year**



Carlina Capelo-Pichardo
La Joya ISD

**Regional Secondary
Teacher of the Year**



Michele Galvan
Sharyland ISD