

## Salina Unified School District No. 305

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### Media Release

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## Teachers of the Year Honored by SPS Board of Education

Salina Public Schools (SPS) Chantay Hill, third grade teacher at Heusner Elementary School, and Collin Carlson, social studies teacher at South High School, have been selected as USD 305 Teachers of the Year. The Salina Board of Education honored them at their regular meeting on March 21, 2023.

### **Elementary Teacher of the Year: Chantay Hill, third grade teacher at Heusner Elementary School**



Chantay Hill has been teaching elementary students for nine years with her most recent experience being a third grade classroom at Heusner Elementary School. She received her Bachelor of Science from Central Christian College of McPherson and earned her Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from Emporia State University.

She is the president of her school's Community Involvement and Carnival Committee, is a member of the Parent Council and a member of the Parent Teacher Association. She leads staff development sessions, opens her classroom to student observers and student teachers and is a teacher mentor for the district.

Chantay is always thinking and rethinking how to make learning apply to real life while teaching her third graders. Her love for math is apparent; she is always searching for new ways to help her students learn. Chantay knows her students well and works to create individualized small group lessons to meet her students where they are. She is caring, yet firm and has high expectations for each student.

Chantay has a presence of playfulness and connectedness that connects well with students who know they are valued as an important part of their classroom community. She is organized and plans ahead to best meet the needs of her students. She makes sure students' learning connects to real-world situations. "When students relate learning to the real world, it brings engagement, it explains the 'why'," said Chantay.

Chantay's favorite moments are when her students learn how good it feels to give to others and to show empathy toward the community. She explained, "I love watching their hearts of kindness grow throughout the year."

### **Secondary Teacher of the Year: Collin Carlson, social studies teacher at South High School**



Collin Carlson has been teaching social studies for 10 years at South High School. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Bethany College in Social Science Teaching and his Master of Arts in History from Pittsburg State University.

Collin is a teacher leader on South High's Writing to Learn PLC, coached the Cougar bowling team for two years and serves as a team sponsor for the Kansas Economics Challenge. He is a member of the board of directors for the Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Museum.

Both inside and outside the classroom, Collin builds relationships with students and is able to joke and bond with them while also holding high expectations for students. "He does not allow a single student to feel excluded and he allows everyone's voice to be heard," explained a former student. "He accomplished this while also requiring thought-provoking responses from students that were supported by logic and classroom literature." Collin goes out of his way to get to know the people around him by understanding their background, interests and concerns.

Collin's instruction reflects his belief in the importance of how competing interests and complexity in any issue allow students to practice the importance of prioritizing concrete facts as well as being open minded. His use of thought-provoking materials encourages them to develop their own tools of critical thinking and reflection, key to civic engagement.

"I entered this profession because I love the opportunity to connect with students and I love my subject matter," Collin stated. "I stay in the profession because of the quality and kindness of colleagues and students that I interact with every day."

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