

NEWS

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Escalante teacher awarded Colorado History Teacher of the Year

The Colorado History Day has named John Hise, an eighth-grade social studies teacher at Escalante Middle School, as the Colorado History Teacher of the Year.

Hise was nominated for the History Teacher of the Year by one of his students, Ciara Smith. In a letter of recommendation to support the student's nomination, Principal Amy Kendzioski said Hise's "personal style includes an enthusiasm that is contagious for all students regardless of their ethnic background, socioeconomic status, or intellectual ability."

The award criteria included the development and use of creative teaching methods that interest students in history and help them make exciting discoveries about the past, and an exemplary commitment to helping students develop their interests in history and recognizing their achievements.

For more than 15 years, Hise has coordinated National History Day at Escalante and throughout the district. He travels every year with students who have qualified for the state competition and always helps new teachers implement National History Day (NHD) into their classrooms. He played a significant role in the District 9-R adoption of National History Day as a required eighth-grade experience and perfected the process as a valid way of assessing students' ability to conduct research.

Hise's students are often engaged in hands-on historical inquiry in his classroom. Popular lessons among students include the creation of "flip-books" where students create illustrated books that demonstrate their understanding of selected topics, the "history walk" down East Third Avenue, the use of Smart Board technology into his classroom presentations, and the incorporation of streaming video into lessons.

"John's expertise as a motivator of students, coupled with his own dedication to life-long learning, truly make him a unique teacher," Kendzioski said.

Each year, Colorado History Day recognizes an outstanding teacher for innovative history teaching in and outside the classroom. Colorado History Day will nominate Hise to receive the National Richard Farrell Teacher of Merit Award, announced at the National History Day contest. The national award comes with a \$1,000 cash prize.

"His enthusiasm and passion for historical inquiry and study is contagious and his students leave his classroom with a deeper interest in the field of history," said Escalante's Vice Principal Tim Arnold.

Each year Hise is recognized by Escalante students as one of the most influential teachers in their lives and former students from Durango High School make a point to return to Escalante to update Hise on their endeavors. Last year Hise was selected by the eighth-graders to receive the Masonic Lodge teacher award and voted him the most inspirational teacher at Escalante.

The Durango Foundation for Educational Excellence also recognized Hise as District 9-R's 2008 Middle School Teacher of the Year.

For more information, contact Amy Kendziorski at 247-9490, ext. 2801.

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