

**Jill Cain Named Howell Public Schools Teacher of the Year**  
*Cain teaches fourth grade at Three Fires Elementary*

**HOWELL, Mich., Feb. 11, 2021** – On Wednesday, Feb. 10, Howell Public Schools announced that Jill Cain, Three Fires Elementary fourth grade teacher, had been selected as the 2020-2021 Howell Public Schools Teacher of the Year. Cain was surprised with the award by Erin MacGregor, Howell Public Schools superintendent, and Bob Starkey, Three Fires Elementary principal. Additionally, Cain's husband was present for the surprise. Cain has been teaching at Howell Public Schools for 18 years.

“I am humbled and have been influenced by the staff that I am a part of. I’ve always strived to do my best to help accomplish a team goal. It sounds cliché but it really takes a community,” said Cain. “I am a small part of a great one. In my experience, children want simple things in life. To be loved, accepted, and heard. That’s the easy part for me. I can do that and hopefully inspire them to do their best along the way.”

Cain received several nominations for the award from both parents and colleagues. The nominations highlighted Cain's caring nature and her willingness to go the extra mile to support all students. The nominations noted that while Cain is currently teaching fourth grade, she is a technology teacher at heart. In that role, Cain has helped develop an innovative experience in technology class that allows students to learn by exploring. Cain created the first MakerSpace within the district and began bringing the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Math) concepts into her classroom several years ago.

"Jill is an outstanding educator who seeks out opportunities to enhance her students' learning experience. Jill began integrating STEAM concepts into her lessons well before it was a national trend," said MacGregor. "But even more than her innovative teaching, Jill's caring nature allows her to create trusting relationships with students. Her students know that Jill truly cares about them and that she will do whatever it takes to support them."

"As a technology instructor, Jill motivates our students and nurtures their desire to learn in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment which develops compassion and mutual respect," said Starkey. "For the past several years, Jill incorporated and continuously increased the use of STEAM lessons into her class. She has incorporated opportunities for students to explore engineering and technology, and use design thinking as an approach to problem-solving while in her class."

A committee of 26 district stakeholders comprised of teachers, support staff, parents, a central office administrator, a principal, and a school board member was tasked with selecting this year's Teacher of the Year. Individually, committee members reviewed the support materials for the 81 teachers nominated for this year's award. Each committee member then voted for their top five nominees. On Tuesday, February 2, the committee met virtually to review the top five Teacher of the Year nominees resulting from the initial vote. After reviewing these outstanding teachers' nominations, the committee voted for their top three choices. Following the vote, Cain emerged this year's winner. She will now represent Howell Public Schools in the Michigan Teacher of the Year competition.

Please join the entire Howell Public Schools community in congratulating Jill Cain on her extraordinary work and dedication to the students of Howell Public Schools. The Howell Board of Education will honor Cain at its March meeting.

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