

West York Area School District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West York Area School District's 2014-2015 Outstanding Teachers of the Year FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ms. Carrie R. Jones and Ms. Kirsty P. Houck are this year's West York Area School District's (WYASD's) recipients of the Shippensburg University Outstanding Teacher Award.

Ms. Jones is a biology teacher at West York Area High School (WYAHS) and has been with WYASD for eight years. She earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Biology from Gettysburg College, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Secondary Education – Biology from York College of Pennsylvania, and a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at McDaniel College. She is currently pursuing her Pennsylvania Principal certification.

Ms. Houck, also a biology teacher at WYAHS, has been with WYASD for twelve years. She earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Development from Wilkes University, and Pennsylvania Secondary Education in Biology certification from Millersville University.

Ms. Jones and Ms. Houck frequently collaborate on projects both in and out of the classroom. As Janet May, WYAHS Principal notes, "it is difficult to talk about Carrie without also mentioning Kirsty" and vice versa. They "display a synergy that is not often seen among colleagues." In their time together in the science department at WYAHS, Ms. Jones and Ms. Houck have joined forces to present sessions on classroom tools to colleagues, including Edmodo, Quizlet, and CDT, along with an original presentation entitled "Improving both student efficacy and student achievement while holding students accountable for their learning." Both are founding members of the SWPBS (School-Wide Positive Behavior Support) Committee, which promotes a positive learning environment, as well as members of the STEE (Science, Technology, Environment, Ecology) Committee, a committee involved in planning the District's science curriculum. Together, Ms. Jones and Ms. Houck designed and implemented review programs to prepare students for the Biology Keystone Exam, and they have been asked to serve on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's committee to develop and

grade Keystone Exams. They work together as Graduation Project Advisors and both have given their time to judge student science fair projects. They initiated the student and staff recognition programs “Stellar Student,” “Stellar Staff,” and “Bucket of Bones.” In the co-curricular arena, they were advisors for the Women in Science Club and are currently Challenge Day Committee members and Class Advisors.

In addition, as a member of the Teacher Effectiveness Committee, Ms. Jones recently presented “Educator Effectiveness: The New Evaluative Tool” to the West York Area School Board. She is a Student Council Advisor and, as such, assisted in the huge undertaking of the Penn State Mini-THON held at WYAHS this past school year which raised \$35,000 for the Four Diamonds Fund. In her personal time, Ms. Jones participates in and organizes drives to raise funds for worthy causes, including Habitat for Humanity. Principal May calls her the “best of the best” and says she “pushes her students toward success, but also pushes herself as well.”

Ms. Houck has served as advisor for several clubs during her time at WYAHS, including Project Harmony, Forensic Science, and Science Fanatics. This year, she will be joining Ms. Jones as a Student Council Advisor. In her time away from work, she is an active member of the Junior League and helps with Girl Scouts. Principal May calls Ms. Houck an “outstanding teacher” who “has worked with colleagues to institute positive incentive programs for both students and staff, and she readily lends a hand to anyone in need.”

Congratulations to Ms. Jones and Ms. Houck!

For more information, please contact Dr. Emilie Lonardi, Superintendent.