



**March 2, 2018**

## **Ann Neely celebrated at Education Celebration**

Last night Ann Neely, fifth grade math teacher, was honored for her 16 years of dedication to teaching students during the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce 17th annual Education Celebration at the Williamsport Country Club.

She was recognized by her coworkers for her student-centered approach to teaching and being able to create a positive, engaging classroom atmosphere that is accepting of everyone. Since the 2002-2003 school year, she has worked to connect with her students and encourage them that they can achieve their goals.

Neely began her teaching career at Central Elementary School teaching fourth grade then later third grade. She has been teaching fifth grade math at Rommelt Elementary School for four years.

She was positively surprised when she found out she would be representing the South Williamsport Area School District at the celebration.

“It’s overwhelming in a good way to know that people collectively agreed to select me for the award,” she said.

Teachers completed a district-wide survey to nominate a faculty member who they felt was innovative, embraces risk and has the highest quality instruction.

There were 29 nominations recognizing 26 individual teachers. With such a broad range of educators to choose from, the administrative team read the narrative portions of each nominee which brought them to their decision.

What stood out about Neely are the two things she takes pride in: caring for her students and her desire to always learn.

During the hustle and bustle of the school day, she makes sure that her students are her focus. She said teaching is about people and the students should always come first.



**Ann Neely, Rommelt fifth grade teacher was celebrated for her desire to help her students and out-of-the-box thinking. She has taught in the district for 16 years.**

She displays her passion for educating children by co-advising the Kiwanis K-Kids Club, coordinates the Math Buddies program and has created Personal Enrichment Program (PEP) along with fellow Rommelt teacher Ashley Zielewicz.

The goals of the program are to make students aware of the support system at school, build their self-confidence and learn to form healthy relationships.

The group of Rommelt students and eighth grade Mountie Mentors meet weekly during study hall.

“I want the students in PEP to be more proactive and feel empowered,” Neely said.

She hopes that the students in her program will take the skills they learn in PEP as they transition into the high school in the next year or two.

“Neely works tirelessly to create the best possible experience for her students,” said Matthew Fisher, Rommelt principal. “In her classroom, she strives to align the content and her instructional approach in a way that capitalizes on students’ strengths.”

Her student-centered approach has instilled in her students a deeper connection with the content and a belief that they can and will be successful, Fisher said.

Outside of the classroom, Neely is always looking for professional development opportunities to broaden her knowledge about teaching and math.

“I don’t want to be unaware of the best practices for teaching,” she said. “I like to be on top of things and keep learning.”

Over the summer she participated in a math camp for teachers at Pennsylvania State University. They were in class all day doing math problems and learning how best to teach math from the math and education professors at the college.

Dwight Woodley, Director of Innovative Learning and Information Systems, said Neely has a very strong background in math which allows her to help her students have a better understanding of the subject.

“It is fun to walk into her classroom and watch the students deconstructing problems and working collaboratively to solve them,” Woodley said.

She is truly an out-of-the-box thinker.

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