

## **Regional Teacher of the Year Mount Vernon's Robert Hand**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**[ANACORTES, WA, June 18, 2018]** – Last week, Mount Vernon High School teacher Robert Hand was named the Regional Teacher of the Year by the Northwest Educational Service District 189 (NWESD). Mr. Hand was selected from a competitive group of six teacher nominees from across the NWESD Region.

The Regional Teacher of the Year program recognizes educators for their excellence in teaching, while giving them a platform to advocate for educational issues of particular interest to them. Some other Regional Teacher of the Year duties include:

- Contributing to a collection of teacher tales to be shared with legislators, educational leaders, and other stakeholders called *From Seed to Apple*.
- Traveling the state to share expertise with community groups, businesses, government officials, and future teachers.

Currently serving as a Family and Consumer Services Instructor at Mount Vernon High School in Mount Vernon, Mr. Hand is described as “having the ability to challenge students, build relationships with students, and to help many students develop the skills that they need to be successful in high school and beyond,” by Rodrick Merrell, MVHS Principal.

In his Teacher of the Year application, Mr. Hand noted that he is driven to draw connections between schoolwork, family, culture, and community in the classroom, citing these elements as one of the main reasons he chose to teach Family and Consumer Sciences. He went on to write, “One of the major issues I see in public education today is the lack of diversity in our workforce... I have always been drawn towards issues of race and ethnic relations...My whole life I have always had the privilege of having all of my teachers look like me. It was easy for me to see myself as a teacher because I could see my reflection in every teacher I ever had. Diversifying the teacher workforce has to start somewhere, and it starts with my kids.” – Robert Hand



“Robert focuses his incredible energy on making MVHS a better place. He serves our District Equity Team, the MVHS Student Engagement and School Culture Committee, and is the advisor for our Social Justice Club. Robert’s passion for students, for equity, and for the power of an individual to make a difference in a community is unparalleled.” – Rodrick Merrell, MVHS Principal

NWESD’s Assistant Superintendent of Operations, David Forsythe, helped guide the selection process of the recipient of NWESD’s Regional Teacher of the Year.

“Robert Hand rose to the top of a competitive field with inspirational letters from his students and colleagues,” said Forsythe. “A lesson on distracted driving in his Life After High School Class impressed the selection team with how it engaged and influenced all students.”

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The NWESD, located in Anacortes, is one of nine Educational Service Districts in Washington State. The NWESD serves 35 school districts in Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, and San Juan counties; providing leadership and cooperative services to the educational communities in the northwest region. For more information about the NWESD, please visit [www.nwesd.org](http://www.nwesd.org).

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