



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

DoDEA Pacific announces 2025 District Teachers of the Year

The Department of Defense Education Activity Pacific region is pleased to announce the 2025 District Teachers of the Year for the Pacific East, Pacific South, and Pacific West districts. Congratulations to these three educators, who are now in the running for DoDEA Teacher of the Year.



Pacific East District

Ms. Barbara Hertz, Yokosuka Middle School

Ms. Barbara Hertz, Information Specialist at Yokosuka Middle School, Commander Fleet Activities – Yokosuka, has been named the 2025 DoDEA Pacific East District Teacher of the Year.

“It is humbling to be named the Pacific East District Teacher of the Year when I’m surrounded by so many teachers who are as deserving,” Ms. Hertz said. “I am excited about the opportunities this recognition brings to advocate for positive collaborative relationships between classroom teachers and specialists and to promote the

importance of information literacy, critical thinking, and of course, the joy of reading.”

Ms. Hertz strives to create a library that caters to the needs of students and supports their intellectual growth. She has found the best way to encourage reading is through building relationships with students, allowing them time to self-select reading choices and engaging in book discussions.

“My best days at school are when a hesitant reader returns to tell me they actually read and enjoyed a book based on my recommendation – and then they ask me for another,” Ms. Hertz said. “I value the continued relationships I have had with students over the years more than anything else. It has been a great privilege to see so many children grow into amazing young adults.”

Ms. Hertz feels that as an Information Specialist, she is uniquely positioned to collaborate with teachers in implementing the College and Career Readiness Standards and in building “real-life” 21st century blended-learning lessons that encourage independent thinking.

In addition to presenting at school, district, and state venues, Ms. Hertz has held numerous leadership positions including creating and chairing the Pacific East Middle School March Book Madness Program, serving as a team leader for the Yokosuka Middle School Pupil Support Services Team, and facilitating focused collaboration groups for Pacific East District’s middle and secondary Information Specialists.

She holds a bachelor’s degree in English Literature and a master’s degree in Education, Library Science from Old Dominion University.



Pacific South District

Mr. Michael Callahan, Amelia Earhart Intermediate School

The Pacific South District has selected Mr. Michael Callahan, a fifth grade teacher at Amelia Earhart Intermediate School at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, as its 2025 Teacher of the Year.

“I am incredibly humbled and honored,” Mr. Callahan said. “Amongst so many talented DoDEA educators, this award validates my devotion to my chosen profession and the positive impact that I strive to make with each and every student.”

Mr. Callahan has taught at AEIS for 24 years. Prior to joining DoDEA, he participated in the Japan and Exchange Teaching Programme (JET), serving for four years as an assistant language teacher in Okinawa City. Throughout his career, Mr. Callahan has exemplified leadership in various capacities, including serving as Continuous School Improvement Leader Team Member (CSILT), Continuous School Improvement (CSI) Co-Chairperson, Grade Level Team Leader, Mentor Leader, and Instructional Rounds Facilitator. He is also the former coach of varsity boys' soccer at Kadena High School, where he guided student-athletes to multiple DoDEA Pacific Far East Championships and Ryukyu International Soccer Association Team Sportsmanship Awards.

"I have had the privilege to work with military-connected students for over two decades now," Mr. Callahan said. "The collective experiences of our DoDEA students creates a dynamic environment in our schools. I am honored to support our military families by striving to create a safe and nurturing environment for their children in my classroom, built on high levels of academic achievement combined with a focus on developing 21st century learners who possess a global awareness and respect for different cultures."

Central to Mr. Callahan's teaching philosophy is the cultivation of 21st-century learning skills among his students. He believes in the power of collaboration, active student engagement, and technology integration as pillars for fostering student growth. By prioritizing these skills, Mr. Callahan strives to empower his students with the essential tools needed to thrive in an ever-evolving global society.

"I truly enjoy building relationships and making connections with my students," he said. "Witnessing their growth, curiosity, and enthusiasm for learning fuels my passion to consistently improve my skills as an educator. Fifth grade is a pivotal year for my students, I enjoy being part of their educational journey as they prepare for the transition to middle school and beyond."

Mr. Callahan holds a bachelor's degree in History from Saint Michael's College of Vermont and a Master's of Education in Educational Leadership from Troy State University.



Pacific West District
Mr. Edward Rozzi, Humphreys High School

Mr. Edward Rozzi has been selected to represent the DoDEA Pacific West District as 2025 Teacher of the Year. Mr. Rozzi teaches 11th grade English/Language Arts and Advanced Placement Language and Composition at Humphreys High School, Camp Humphreys, South Korea.

Mr. Rozzi has taught at Humphreys High School for the past five years. He taught at DoDEA's Seoul American High School for two years, prior to its closure. His teaching experience also includes nine years of teaching ELA and History for Quality Schools International in Kazakhstan and China.

As a teacher-leader at Humphreys High School, Mr. Rozzi has served as ELA and World Language Department Chair, Continuous School Improvement Leadership Team Member, and Focused Collaboration Group Leader, and Student Success Committee Member. He is also an active participant in the DoDEA Pacific Teacher Leadership Academy.

"As DoDEA teachers, we work hard every day to impact the lives of military-connected students in many different facets of life and academics," Mr. Rozzi said. "Knowing that this hard work has been recognized is a culmination of a lot of hours spent before, during, and after school, teaching and building mentorship outside of the classroom, sponsoring clubs/sports that make Humphreys High – and many other DoDEA schools around the world – a place students are excited to be. To be named the 2025 District Teacher of the Year is an honor, privilege, and, in many respects, a new felt responsibility to do my best to represent the hard work I see my colleagues put into their classrooms, and school, each day."

Mr. Rozzi believes all students deserve the right to have their experiences, cultural lenses and views appreciated within a democratic setting of learning. After the dismissal bell rings, he can be found coaching men's volleyball and eSports, as well as serving as sponsor for the National English Honor Society and Junior Class.

"Military-connected students are special because they are not only children of service members, contractors, and DOD civilians keeping our country safe, stateside, and abroad, but also symbolize the multi-faceted views and experiences needed to continue to make America the greatest country in the world," Mr. Rozzi said. "Being given the responsibility to not only live overseas, but also represent one's country, means having to hold oneself to a higher standard of responsibility and conduct, but also dealing with a set of challenges that are completely foreign to those that don't have to move overseas. Working with military-connected students is special because they are the most resilient, persistent, and uniquely predisposed students I've taught, and that makes my classroom, and this organization, a special place to be a part of."

Mr. Rozzi holds a bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education from Northern Arizona University and two Masters of Education in literacy and educational leadership, both from Eastern Washington University.