

NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS FOR FREEDOM ISSUE PAPER: LOOK WHO'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR??

BACKGROUND. Each year, the NE Dept. of Education awards a NE teacher the NE Teacher of the Year award. The teacher of the year award recognizes teachers who are exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled and who inspire a diverse group of students to learn.

THE 2023 SELECTION. Renee Jones, a Lincoln High English teacher since 2021, won the 2023 award. A panel of state educators nominated her for the award, bestowed annually on a NE teacher. Matthew Blomstedt, the outgoing NE Education Commissioner, bestowed this award to her as a surprise in her classroom. He held an apple trophy in his hand and presented it to Jones as the 2023 "Nebraska Teacher of the Year." Blomstedt gushed that Jones helps students overcome their fear of speaking to an audience. "The reality is this is both an honor for you but really an honor for teachers," he continued. "Connecting students is the most influential and important element of my role as a teacher," Jones said in her award application, "Connecting students with me, with their peers, and with themselves, is at the heart of gaining the confidence they need," she said. Jones began her teaching career in 2014 in California and is an active member of the National Council of Teachers of English and Kiwanis International. In addition, Jones is a published author, a South by Southwest EDU presenter, and has earned several scholarships. She received the Lincoln Public Schools Foundation Inspire Award in 2019. The State Board of Education with a public celebration soon will honor this teacher, who then will participate in the National Teacher of the Year competition. Said Jones, "I feel proud and humbled. I can't wait to represent the teachers of Nebraska for 2023!" She will travel the state and country to take part in various educational conferences and workshops. "These kids are so lucky to be Links and to have this wonderful teacher," liberal State Board of Education President Koch-Johns said.



MORE ABOUT THIS WINNER. She says her secret is building trust with students, saying, "I always want to make my students feel like I care about them." She hopes to instill lessons and values in students that last a lifetime, wanting them to interact with people that maybe would not be their first choice because of comfort levels. "I think it's an honor that somebody would entrust me to represent the people of Nebraska and teachers," Jones said. Upon closer scrutiny, we find that this teacher of the year bragged about buying, among others, a children's book at a transgender stripper event titled, [The Hips on the Drag Queen go Swish Swish Swish](#) and eagerly participated in Drag Queen Story Hour. She mirrored another attendee by gushing that it had been a while since she had a good twirl. (see reverse side)

TAKE ACTION NOW. This latest scandal is the 2nd involving the NE Dept. of Education, the first one pertaining to the department website including tactics telling teachers how to handle parents outraged by objectionable curriculum and library materials. Taxpayers want to know how many of our dollars paid for this award, and if this teacher plans to share her new books with her students. Both parents and taxpayers should show outrage at this educator receiving such a prestigious award. Using the information above, lobby your state board of education member to sponsor a resolution to revoke this award. Email netaxpayers@gmail.com for board member contact information and to join our NTF *Education Watch* project.

Research, documentation, and analysis for this issue paper done by **Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom**. This material copyrighted by Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom, with express prior permission granted for its use by other groups in the *NE Conservative Coalition Network*. 10-22. C



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Thread



John Gage

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BREAKING: the Nebraska Department of Education just awarded their teacher of the year award to Renee Jones, a high school English teacher and a supporter of Drag Queen Story Hour — all on the taxpayer dime.

klkntv.com/lincoln-highs-...

Renee Jones
March 8 · 🌐

My final session at [SXSW EDU](#) today included the incredible opportunity to take part in the [Drag Queen Story Hour](#). As one other audience members said "it's been awhile since I've had a good twirl."

Thank you for sharing your joy and encouraging educators to share their authentic selves with our students. You better believe I'll be buying a few new inclusive childrens books- including "The Hips on the Drag Queen Go Swish Swish Swish".

Additionally, I got to learn from the South Lake podcast creators, listen as George Johnson, the author of "All Boys Aren't Blue" shared his experiences, and be only feet away from Dr. Tequilla Brownie as she discussed the importance of high expectations and disrupting the cycle of poverty. I heard how [Mr. Poirier](#) brings fun into his classroom, and how High School For the Recording Arts is doing school differently.

It was an incredible day of learning and reflecting. 😊👏

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Jennifer Marron
That's awesome! **Congratulations!**

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