

# Sheboygan North teacher a contender for National Teacher of the Year award

Leah Ulatowski, USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 5:31 p.m. CT Sept. 14, 2017 | Updated 7:28 p.m. CT Sept. 14, 2017



(Photo: Gary C. Klein/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin)

SHEBOYGAN — After being named Wisconsin's 2018 Special Services Teacher of the Year last spring, Matthew Miller, an English learner teacher at Sheboygan's North High School, will represent the state in the National Teacher of the Year program, it was announced Thursday.

"Matthew pushes himself to do more, so here he is our state's representative to the National Teacher of the Year program," State Superintendent Tony Evers said in a press release. "He focuses on providing students what they need to succeed and is an excellent role model for teachers in his school, the Sheboygan Area School District, and across our state and nation."

As Wisconsin's National Teacher of the Year representative, Miller will receive \$6,000 from the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation.

In representing the state, Miller will be a contender for the National Teacher of the Year distinction, which will be chosen by a selection committee in spring 2018. Each spring, the national teacher of the year has been introduced and given the honor by the President of the United States.

"I have a job to do now, and that is to recognize and honor the greatness of Wisconsin's students, teachers, schools and communities," Miller said of the distinction in an email statement.

When asked how he plans to use the public stage of the state distinction, and possibly the national distinction, Miller said he is invested in creating student leaders.

"America's students and teachers are our tomorrow makers, yet for the past century, we have largely been compelled to adopt positions of followership," he wrote. "My platform is that, if we are to fulfill our potential to create a better tomorrow, then we need meaningful opportunities to develop our leadership."

Joe Sheehan, Sheboygan Area School District superintendent, sang Miller's praises on Thursday.

"Matt Miller is an incredible educator of the whole student, and we are fortunate to have many, many excellent teachers in our district," Sheehan said in an email statement. "He is a strong advocate for building leadership skills in students. The entire SASD community is proud of you."

Miller was among four educators named to the Wisconsin Teacher of the Year program in spring to represent the 2017-18 teaching corps. All four educators will be honored at a Capitol ceremony during the State of Education address at noon on Sept. 21.

"Teachers make such a difference in the lives of children," Herb Kohl, philanthropist and businessman, who co-sponsors the Wisconsin Teacher of the Year program through his educational foundation, said in a press release. "I am pleased to support our teachers in their efforts to help all children achieve."

With a passion for leadership and community service, Miller has facilitated hundreds of leadership, service learning and community-building projects for students in the district. He created the Hmong Leadership Collective, a statewide student-led group and an outgrowth of the district's Hmong Leadership Council, which provides more than a thousand hours of community service.

The collective seeks to strengthen Hmong culture, identity and communities to positively transform society and build leadership skills. Miller helps Hmong students learn about and celebrate their own culture while adapting to life in America, according to a press release.

In addition, Miller's grant writing for a precollege program through the University of Wisconsin-Sheboygan provided a "Language and Leadership" summer program that boosted college readiness and civic engagement among area English learners from lower-income families.

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The National Teacher of the Year program began in 1952 and is the oldest national honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching.