



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Daniel Burnham Elementary School teacher Nichole Carder-Bocek among finalists in prestigious statewide award for teaching excellence**

*2020 Golden Apple Awards recognize excellence in Illinois teachers in grades 4-8 for superior performance in the classroom and school community*

Cicero, Ill. – Feb. 6, 2020 – Cicero District 99 and Daniel Burnham Elementary School fourth-grade teacher Nichole Carder-Bocek has been named a finalist for the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching and Leadership. Carder-Bocek is one of only 30 finalists selected from an extremely competitive pool of more than 730 educators nominated from schools across Illinois.

The Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching honors outstanding educators for their roles in having lasting, positive effects on students' lives and school communities. Teacher finalists demonstrate — in their teaching and results — significant, positive impact on their students' growth and learning.

"I know I speak for the entire Cicero District 99 community when saying how proud we are of Ms. Carder-Bocek and her recognition for excellence in education," said Superintendent Rodolfo Hernandez. "Her dedication and work perfectly exemplify our community belief that 'good is not enough.' Working together — administrators, staff, students and families — we will continually strive to ignite the road to excellence."

Carder-Bocek has taught in Cicero District 99 at Burnham for the past seven years; previously teaching sixth and third grade and now teaching fourth grade. Of her seven years in District 99, Carder-Bocek has taught the last four in a co-taught classroom, teaching both general education and special education students. She currently teaches math, reading, writing, social studies, science and health. Carder-Bocek is also heavily involved in Burnham's School Improvement Plan and Positive Behavior Support teams, and is her fourth-grade team's Professional Learning Communities facilitator.

"I'm honored to be a finalist in the Golden Apple Awards," said Carder-Bocek. "I'm also grateful to my Cicero District 99 and Burnham family for not only their support in this process, but for empowering me to be able to make an impact on students' lives every day."

A graduate of Eastern Illinois University, Carder-Bocek is among several distinguished educators in her family, with her grandfather, Edward Carder, serving as District 99's orchestra director for several decades.

Nominations are provided by fellow educators, students, parents and community members nominate teachers for the awards and self-submissions were not accepted. In the coming weeks, members of the Golden Apple parent organization will join Carder-Bocek at Burnham and will be observing her class. In addition to examining her teaching style and lessons, they will interview students, colleagues, parents and community leaders. After the on-campus visit, 10 winners will be selected.

Award finalists will be honored Saturday, Feb. 22 at the Golden Apple Celebration of Excellence in Teaching & Leadership in St. Charles.

### **About Cicero School District 99**

District 99 is a public elementary school district in Cicero, Ill., a near-west suburb of Chicago that is home to more than 82,000 residents. The District includes 16 schools and educates more than 13,000 students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, 95 percent of whom come from low-income households and qualify for either free or reduced-price lunch.

### **About Golden Apple**

Golden Apple's mission is to inspire, develop and support teacher and school leader excellence in Illinois, especially in schools-of-need. Our leading-edge preparation delivers exceptional teachers who make an impact. We help students thrive in the classroom and in life. Since our beginning, we have recognized master educators annually; and, these master educators help prepare the next generation of teachers. Our vision is an Illinois in which every classroom has a great teacher and to realize this, we are committed to making a material difference in resolving the teacher shortage throughout Illinois. Visit <http://www.goldenapple.org> for more information.

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