



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**MEDIA ALERT** – Thursday, February 9, 2023  
**Fargo Public School District #1**

## **LICHTBLAU NAMED FARGO PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 2023 TEACHER OF THE YEAR**



South High School vocal music teacher **Sara Lichtblau** has been named the **Fargo Public Schools 2023 Teacher of the Year**. Superintendent Dr. Rupak Gandhi surprised her with an announcement at South High School on Thursday.

Lichtblau has served as the vocal music teacher at South since 2009, and a staff member said her impact on the school was felt immediately upon starting and has continued to be felt ever since. Her education career began as a K-12 vocal music teacher at Enderlin Public School in Enderlin, N.D., where she worked from 1998-2000. She was an elementary music teacher at Dilworth Elementary School

in Dilworth, Minn. from 2000-09.

Lichtblau holds a Bachelor of Science in Music Education and a master's degree in Choral Conducting from North Dakota State University.

As the vocal music teacher at South, Lichtblau conducts the school's choirs and helps students to grow as musicians in both large group choral settings and small group and one-on-one vocal lessons. She prepares the students to perform at concerts and compete in Eastern Dakota Conference and state choir competitions.

Lichtblau conducts South's audition choir, Belle Orso Vocci, and dedicates time for BOV to perform outside of school hours. BOV spreads holiday cheer with a caroling tour each December and is set to perform at Fargo's Patriots Day celebration this year. She coordinates choir students to perform the "Star-Spangled Banner" at nearly all Bruins athletic events. And she serves as the vocal music director and pit orchestra conductor for the South High Drama Club's annual musical productions.

She was named the North Dakota American Choral Directors Association Director of the Year in 2021 and the South High School Choir was selected as the Governor's Choir in 2011-12.

A staff member from South described Lichtblau as an irreplaceable instructor and a superstar teacher who has earned the esteem of students, parents, peers and principals. There is not a day

that she does not have a smile on her face and a kind word to share. She believes and sees the best in people and helps them work towards their potential.

Her love for music is described as being infectious. That infectious love for music is on full display in a story from a South High School parent who says Lichtblau helped their child discover and develop a late-blooming love for music. The student had shown little interest in singing until their junior year, but got a role in the musical and enjoyed it so much they joined choir and it became their favorite class.

Lichtblau's immense level of caring for students was on full display as she helped guide students through a time of upheaval and uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic. One student said that they were struggling to reorient themselves to attending school in person after an extended period of distance learning, and choir became that student's foundation for regaining a sense of normalcy. They said they made it through that first semester back in-person because they could always look forward to choir and knew how much Lichtblau cared about them.

Lichtblau follows Amy Anderson, an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Teacher at Longfellow Elementary School and Early Childhood Literacy Partner at Agassiz, as the District's recipient of the Teacher of the Year honor. Her name will now be considered for the Cass County Teacher of the Year Award. The Cass County Teacher of the Year is then forwarded to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction as a candidate for the North Dakota Teacher of the Year award.

The Fargo Public Schools Teacher of the Year award has been presented within the District since 1957. The honor is an award regularly bestowed as part of the District's annual Staff Recognition Program. The District also annually recognizes a Support Staff of the Year and an Administrator of the Year as part of this recognition program.

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