FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MEDIA ALERT – Tuesday, February 3, 2026
Fargo Public School District #1

URLACHER NAMED FPS 2026 TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Discovery Middle School Spanish Teacher **Jim Urlacher** has been named the **Fargo Public Schools 2026 Teacher of the Year**. Superintendent Dr. Cory Steiner surprised him with an announcement Tuesday at Discovery Middle School.

Urlacher has spent his entire professional teaching career with Fargo Public Schools, beginning as a Spanish Teacher at Agassiz Middle School in 2005 and moving to his current position at Discovery Middle School in 2006. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Spanish Education with an English Teaching Minor from North Dakota State University and a Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language from Minnesota State University Moorhead.

Urlacher's nominators say that he fundamentally embodies the Fargo Public Schools mission of educating and empowering all students to succeed by maintaining consistently high standards for every student regardless of their background or current ability. He views all student interactions, even missteps, as a teachable opportunities that inspire growth. When faced with difficult or complex student situations, he refuses to lower his standards and employs an approach that is consistently thoughtful, vulnerable, and restorative and balances the needs of engaged students with those that struggled significantly.

Urlacher prioritizes providing first-hand real world cultural experiences. Each year, he invites parents and community members to cook cultural dishes with his students and share cultural activities. These shared experiences help students build cultural bridges and foster community that provides a foundation for accepting and connecting with cultures beyond their own. He has even taken the cultural experience beyond the classroom, chaperoning student trips to France, Spain, Canada, and Washington, D.C. and organizing a teacher trip to Peru.

Urlacher is an impactful veteran teacher-leader whose impact, his nominators say, is felt throughout Discovery Middle School and all of Fargo Public Schools. Employing a solutions-focused mindset, when he brings up a problem, he also has a solution in place to resolve it. He is often consulted for his professional opinion and insight by both building and District administration and is a key resource who has served as a formal and informal mentor for teachers in the building and the District. He is a teacher that new teachers are sent to observe and veteran teachers solicit ideas from. He has served as a Catalyst Coach, School Improvement Chair, Fargo

Education Association negotiator, and World Languages facilitator, team leader, content advisor, and department chair.

Urlacher follows Davies High School Social Studies Teacher Bart Manson as the District's recipient of the Teacher of the Year honor. His 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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