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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD and Lewisville ISD Teachers Named 2026 Region 11 Teachers of the Year

(White Settlement, TX) – An elementary educator from Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD and a high school special education teacher from Lewisville ISD have been selected to represent North Central Texas in this year's Texas Teacher of the Year competition hosted by the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA).

Anquinette Hill, Advanced Academics Specialist at Arbor Creek Elementary in Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD, and Mary McMinimy, Academic Life Skills teacher at Flower Mound High School in Lewisville ISD, were named the 2026 Region 11 Teachers of the Year during a special awards ceremony hosted by Education Service Center Region 11 and generously sponsored by EECU. The ceremony recognizes outstanding educators across the region who exemplify excellence in teaching, innovation, leadership, and a deep commitment to student success.

The Teacher of the Year Program allows each Texas school district to submit one elementary and one secondary nominee for regional consideration. This year, educators from across Region 11 submitted applications showcasing their instructional expertise, leadership, and impact both inside and outside the classroom.

To compete at the regional level, nominees submitted a professional portfolio that included a résumé, professional biography, and essays describing their instructional philosophy, contributions to school culture, community engagement, leadership experiences, and vision for the teaching profession. Applications were reviewed and scored by a panel consisting of former Teachers of the Year, classroom educators, district leaders, and ESC Region 11 staff.

In addition to the two regional winners, eight educators were recognized as finalists for the exceptional quality of their applications.

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Elementary Finalists:

- Pamela Lewis, Arlington ISD
- Amy Wilson, Denton ISD
- Rocio Rayman, Everman ISD
- Megan Lockett, Keller ISD

Secondary Finalists:

- Heaven Tello, Arlington ISD
- Justin Newsom, Bridgeport ISD
- Jeffrey Neaves, Northwest ISD
- Benjamin Vollmer, Venus ISD

Anquinette Hill – 2026 Region 11 Elementary Teacher of the Year

With more than 16 years in education, Anquinette Hill has dedicated her career to creating innovative learning experiences that inspire curiosity, celebrate diversity, and empower every student to succeed. As the Advanced Academics Specialist and future Assistant Principal at Arbor Creek Elementary in Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD, Hill combines gifted education, STEAM, technology integration, and project-based learning to help students see possibilities beyond the classroom.

Hill holds master's degrees in Educational Leadership and Teaching English Language Learners, along with a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. Throughout her career, she has served as a teacher, gifted and talented leader, technology integration specialist, mentor, and campus leader, always focused on expanding opportunities for students and supporting fellow educators.

Known for transforming learning into authentic experiences, Hill has developed initiatives such as a campus-wide Celebration of World Cultures, competitive robotics experiences, chess programming, and innovative AI-enhanced literacy projects. Her philosophy centers on helping students see themselves as global citizens while ensuring every child feels valued, challenged, and connected.

Mary McMinimy – 2026 Region 11 Secondary Teacher of the Year

Mary McMinimy has spent the past decade transforming the educational experience for students with significant cognitive disabilities at Flower Mound High School in Lewisville ISD. As an Academic Life Skills teacher and department chair, she creates authentic learning experiences that build independence, confidence, and meaningful connections far beyond the classroom.

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McMinimy entered education after a successful career in the business world, bringing with her a unique perspective on leadership, collaboration, and lifelong learning. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Texas Woman's University and completed her alternative teacher certification through Texas Teachers.

McMinimy is widely recognized for creating real-world learning opportunities, including the student-operated 1240 Tavern on Main, where students develop vocational, communication, and independent living skills through authentic workplace experiences. She also serves as co-sponsor of Flower Mound High School's Circle of Friends program, fostering meaningful relationships between Life Skills students and their general education peers while promoting inclusion and belonging across campus.

Her unwavering belief that every student deserves opportunities to contribute, connect, and thrive has made a lasting impact on students, families, and the entire school community.

Hill and McMinimy will now advance to compete at the state level for the Texas Teacher of the Year award. The Texas Association of School Administrators' selection committee will conduct final interviews this fall before naming the state's Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year.

These outstanding educators represent the very best of Region 11 and embody the innovation, compassion, and dedication that define excellence in Texas public education.

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