

Matusiak named Teacher of the Year

Danika Stilwell
Editor-in-Chief

After a nearly two month long selection process, science teacher Mark Matusiak was named Teacher of the Year on Feb. 24.

Although he was honored to receive the award, Matusiak said he feels as if he did not truly earn it because of the perseverance of other teachers throughout this school year.

“I feel good, but I don’t feel like I deserve it. I feel like there are other teachers that have been doing so much more behind the scenes that we don’t always see [but] I’ve noticed,” Matusiak said. “It’s been a tough year for a lot of teachers going through a lot of stress and anxiety, and for them to be able to put on a strong face and come in every day is tough. But, there are a lot of good things being done in this school and students are very lucky to have a lot of these teachers that we have.”

Despite Matusiak believing that he does not deserve the award, several outspoken staff members and students said they disagree. Junior Grace McGinnis, a student in Matusiak’s Human Anatomy class, said that the way he teaches the course’s content keeps his

students both interested and focused.

“Mr. Matusiak continuously keeps us engaged in his class with his outgoing personality. He’s always wanting what’s best for his students and makes learning fun,” McGinnis said.

One of his nominators was journalism teacher Clay Zigler, who said he is inspired by Matusiak’s dedication to his students.

“I’ve known Mr. Matusiak for about 10 years now, and as I’ve known him we’ve become pretty good friends and I’ve watched the way he interacts with students and I have been very impressed by that, especially when we were dealing with COVID-19. We had lots of talks about how to do different things and how to differently approach it and I can see his passion for teaching,” Zigler said.

Physical education teacher Jon Bunyard said Matusiak not only excels at teaching his students, but at helping fellow staff members with technology.

“We all know how good of a teacher he is. He also doubled this year as a Canvas expert and teacher saver. There were times where I was scrambling, last minute of course, to figure out how to navigate through Canvas for various reasons and I could always count on [him] to save the day,” Bunyard said.



Science teacher Mark Matusiak holds up the Teacher of the Year banner as his students crowd around him. Matusiak was surprised with the honor in his seventh hour class. (Photo by Ruth Vogel)

Assistant Principal Dr. Kelly Mignerone oversaw the process for selecting the Teacher of the Year this school year and said the winner was decided by which teacher earned the most points in the voting system.

“After the deadline for submitting nominations, a Google Form with [the] nominations [on a] ballot was made and sent out to the Summit staff. The staff had several days to read through the

nominations and vote. They then selected three teachers on the ballot. Their first vote received three points, second vote received two points and third vote got one point. I calculated the totals and then we surprised Mr. Matusiak,” Mignerone said.

After the Feb. 12 deadline for the nominations passed, 15 teachers were chosen as finalists and then voted upon by teachers. These other top nominees included

language arts teachers Kristen Mater and Jennifer Perone, science teachers Christine Pickett, Sean Torgoley, James Rinehart, and Sarah Moonier, math teacher Ryley Spiezio, fine arts teachers Joseph Padawan, Peter Repp, and John Mazar, physical education teacher Rebecca Hulvey, social studies teacher Rebecca McLaughlin, and world language teachers Kacey Schlotz and Kimberly Lackey.

SAT, ACT make changes to test formatting

Bridget Reichmuth
Of The Talon staff

The College Board announced on Jan. 19 that they are no longer offering SAT subject tests or the SAT with essay, while the ACT has postponed the section retesting option until further notice.

Students who are currently registered for an upcoming SAT subject test in the U.S. will automatically have their registration canceled and fees refunded. The optional SAT essay will also be discontinued after the June 2021 administration. The College Board stated that they are discontinuing the SAT subject tests to reduce the demands on students and that the expanded reach of AP and its widespread availability means the subject tests are no longer necessary for students to show what they know.

College and Career Counselor Ivy Hartman said she believes that the changes to the SAT will not affect many Summit students.

“We don’t have many students that take the SAT subject tests. These are only used by a handful of highly selective colleges. This will remove some additional pressure for testing. Likewise- only a handful of colleges require an ACT or SAT with an essay for admission. I believe most colleges are getting rid of this requirement and this is why College Board is shifting their testing requirements,” Hartman said.

Testing Coordinator Jennifer Kottmann said that the new changes that are being implemented will not affect the processes of the SAT.

“The SAT will still be scored the same way. The subject exams and writing tests were scored separately, so they are just

simply being dropped,” Kottmann said.

Kottmann said the ACT postponed the introduction of the section retesting due to the pandemic.

“ACT has postponed its section retesting in order to keep up with things during the pandemic. Many test centers were shut down in the spring/summer of 2020, which has made it difficult for students to get in to take the exam due to a backlog this fall. Testing centers have reduced capacity due to social distancing, etc. There is simply no capacity to accommodate students who want to retake just one section. Also, the section retesting was going to be offered online only. This presents complications for test centers hosting students from multiple schools - does the test center have to provide devices for each student, technical support, guest logins, etc. This requires a significant increase in preparation and technology support than offering a traditional paper/pencil exam,” Kottmann said.

Junior Grace Bailey said she thinks that the changes to the standardized tests, in particular the ACT, will give students the chance to make improvements in specific subject areas. She also said that this change will most likely result in an increase in the national average holistically.

“I think the changes to ACT testing will give me the opportunity to raise my score, and I’m looking forward to being able to focus my studying on the areas needing improvement. However, I think the updates will raise the overall average test score so it is a double-edged sword. While I might be able to achieve a higher score, I would think that the national average would be higher as well. As a result, I’m not sure if any ground would have been gained,” Bailey said.



Merit Scholars

Seniors Cayce Rose, Katie Dillion, Allison Byrne (front row), Zack Swayne, Calvin Yan, Samhi Mitra, Caleb Messerly (back row), and Paul Larsen (not pictured) are named National Merit Finalists. Their scores on the PSAT taken during their junior year qualified them as semi-finalists. (Photo by Ruth Vogel)