

WSU News

April 07, 2022



WSU alumni Callie Harris and Zerrin Oelze have been named 2022 Presidential Award Winners.

Two Wichita State alumni win U.S. Presidential Awards for Excellence

By Jennifer Lane, CAS

Two Wichita-area teachers who graduated from Wichita State University's School of Education were recently recognized for their outstanding work in the classroom by the White House with the [Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching \(PAEMST\)](#). PAEMST is the highest award kindergarten through 12th grade mathematics and science teachers can receive from the U.S. government.

Callie Harris, who earned her bachelor's in elementary education from WSU in 2004 and her master's of education at WSU in 2008, is assistant principal at Pray-Woodman Elementary School in the Maize School District. She started as assistant principal in fall 2021. Prior to that, she served as the math interventionist for the school, training staff to use student data to meet individual student needs. Harris worked with more than 100 students a day with mathematical needs. In 2019, she won a nearly \$12,000 grant to implement a Stop Everything and STEAM Day for her school building. Those funds allowed all students in the school to participate in monthly STEAM events and opened doors for community partnerships with the Wichita State University College of Engineering, which has continued through the 2021 school year.

Zerrin Oelze, who earned her bachelor's in Elementary Education from WSU in 2001, is a science teacher at McLean Science and Technology Magnet Elementary in Wichita. Oelze's students collaborate on and engage in hands-on learning in the science lab. Oelze incorporates place-based science in an Outdoor Wildlife Learning Site (OWLS), as well as with an indoor honeybee hive in the science lab. She coordinates schoolwide science events each quarter, a yearly STEM Night for families and family workdays in the OWLS. 🍌