



# NEWS RELEASE

## Utah State Board of Education

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### Cottonwood High English teacher named Utah Teacher of the Year

SALT LAKE CITY – The Utah State Board of Education today named Lauren E Merkley, an English teacher at Granite School District’s Cottonwood High School, as 2020 Utah Teacher of the Year.

Merkley, of Salt Lake City, was presented with a check for \$10,000 and will compete with her fellow teachers of the year in a national competition. She will meet with fellow teachers of the year at a national conference, meet with the President in Washington, D.C., and attend space camp in Alabama next summer.

Salt Lake City East High School English, and ACT and college prep teacher Rebecca Richardson was named first runner up and received a check for \$5,000. Kelland Davis, an eighth grade math teacher at North Davis Junior High School in the Davis School District, was named second runner up and received a check for \$3,000.

A committee with representatives from the Utah State Board of Education, the Utah State Charter School Board, parents, teachers, principals, and 2018 Utah Teacher of the Year Kellie May selected Merkley from among local teachers of the year for the honor. All 25 local teachers of the year were honored at a banquet at the Salt Lake City Marriott University Park Hotel on Thursday.

“Lauren is a member of Cottonwood’s Equal Opportunity Schools team where she worked to identify students from underrepresented subgroups to consider taking a more rigorous course like AP, concurrent enrollment, CTE (Career and Technical Education) Pathway, or honors,” wrote Cottonwood Principal Terri Roylance. “Ms. Merkley is also a member of the Cottonwood leadership team. This team looks at school data to help identify the positive things that are going on in the school as well as coming up with solutions for problems.”

“Lauren is like the Pied Piper of English class,” wrote Cottonwood High Head Counselor Amanda Calton. “Kids enroll in her classes in droves because they believe she is personally invested in their success and has the ability to help them reach their goals. I’ve never seen anything like it – especially as it pertains to first generation college students and kids who have never before taken advanced classes. They come to her classes, they succeed, they build confidence, they continue to challenge themselves elsewhere.”

Merkley succeeds May, who is currently a student teacher specialist in the Salt Lake City School District, but formerly worked as an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) coordinator at West High School in Salt Lake City.

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