Annice Brave, an English and Journalism Teacher at Alton High School, was named the 2011 Illinois Teacher of the Year. She was chosen from eight finalists in the fall of 2010 and was among more than 150 educators from across Illinois who were honored as part of the Illinois State Board of Education’s recognition program for teachers, administrators and school personnel.

In January of 2011, she was one of four finalists for the National Teacher of the Year Award. Brave represented Illinois throughout the year, including trips to the White House and NASA Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala.

A teacher for more than two decades, Brave also serves as chair of her school’s English department. In 2001, Brave became the first teacher in Alton Community Unit School District 11 to earn National Board Certification. Since then, she has mentored numerous teachers as they earn their certification.

At Alton High, Brave was instrumental in developing a student radio program in partnership with Lewis and Clark Community College. The program gives students the opportunity to get on-air experience through the college radio station. Brave has also been highly involved in developing a media class that combines writing with technology. She spends her lunch hour in her classroom so that students may work on the school newspaper, Redbird Word, during their study halls. And she is also the faculty sponsor of the student literacy magazine, Calliope.

In her nomination letter, Principal Barbara A. Gillian, wrote that Brave’s “devotion to all students is obvious in the countless hours she spends working with small groups and individuals long after the school day ends.”

Brave holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication and a Master of Science in Education from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. She is Nationally Board Certified in Adolescent and Young Adult/English Language Arts.

Nearly 180 nominations for ISBE’s Those Who Excel were reviewed and scored three times by a selection committee comprised of administrators, teachers, and school board members. Teacher of the Year finalists are selected from the top teachers nominated.

The eight finalists for Teacher of the Year were interviewed and videotaped and those interviews were scored again before making the final recommendation. Principals, faculty, parents and students submit letters on behalf of candidates as part of the nomination process.