High school English teacher Brian W. Curtin was named the 2013 Illinois Teacher of the Year by the Illinois State Board of Education. Brian teaches grades 9-12 at Schaumburg High School in Township High School District 211. He was one of nine Teacher of the Year candidates at the 38th annual Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year banquet held Oct. 20, 2012, in Normal. More than 200 educators from across the state were honored as part of ISBE’s recognition program for teachers, administrators and school personnel.

As Illinois Teacher of the Year, Curtin competed for National Teacher of the Year and represented Illinois throughout the year, including trips to the White House and NASA Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala. Now in his 11th year of teaching, Brian maintains a great rapport with his colleagues, parents and most importantly, students. Brian graduated from the University of Illinois at Champaign and holds a Master of Arts in English education from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

While a junior at the University of Illinois, Brian studied abroad in Granada, Spain. It was there he decided that he wanted to be a teacher for the rest of his life. Brian draws upon his own experiences playing various sports to guide him as a lacrosse and football coach who builds students’ self-confidence and skills. Known for his enthusiasm for learning, he encourages students to be proactive in their education and life goals.

Brian’s impact is not limited to the classroom or athletic field. Brian is the Teaching Chair of Schaumburg High’s Saxon Pride, a group of faculty members who meet regularly to address school culture and behavior issues. Using the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS), Brian has developed a series of popular commercials starring students. The commercials are designed to reinforce the program’s goals of exemplifying positive behaviors rather than merely reacting to negative behavior. Brian’s active participation in Saxon Pride is credited with enhancing Schaumburg High’s positive culture.

More than 200 nominations for Those Who Excel were reviewed and scored three times by a selection committee comprised of administrators, teachers and school board members. The nine finalists for Teacher of the Year were interviewed and videotaped and those interviews were scored again before a final recommendation was made. Principals, faculty, parents and students submit letters on behalf of candidates as part of the nomination process.

On Oct. 19, 2013, Brian joined educators from across the state at the 39th annual Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year banquet as Pam Reilly was named the 2014 Illinois Teacher of the Year. Pam teaches second grade at Woodbury Elementary in Sandwich Community Unit School District 430.