

Illinois State Board of Education

James T. Meeks, Chairman
Tony Smith, Ph.D., State Superintendent



Meet Teacher of the Year Finalist Paul Rausch of Woodstock High School

By his own admission, Paul Rausch was not a good student in his primary and secondary school years. He understood the material but says a lack of confidence and shortage of self-discipline held him back. When Paul enrolled in a choir class during high school, he knew he had found his niche. A college course in conducting ignited his passion to teach high school choral music and 31 years later, he still loves what he does.



Paul began his career at Woodstock High School with a vision for the music program and for his students. He had complete faith in his students' abilities to achieve and to discover the excellence within each of them. Paul raised his expectations with each new accomplishment, and his students rose to the challenges he presented. As his principal explains, "He is the King Midas of Woodstock High School, with a golden touch that is developed through passion, creativity, and most importantly, the belief that all students can be successful."

Paul consistently demonstrates his ability to blend the three E's of enthusiasm, expectations, and excellence. He focuses on developing character and reasoning within his students as much as he focuses on their choral skills. He has built the choral program at Woodstock into a true music powerhouse with students competing and performing across the country, and abroad. Students, teachers, parents, and administrators all agree – Paul Rausch makes a difference.

Paul is one of our 10 finalists for Illinois Teacher of the Year, which we will name at the Those Who Excel banquet in Normal on Oct. 17. To learn more about the other finalists, visit www.isbe.net/those-who-excel/default.htm. Paul was featured in the [Sept. 1, 2015, ISBE Weekly Message](#).