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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Ron Schaffner Recognized as MiSTEM Region 2 Educator of the Year

Ann Arbor, Mich. - MiSTEM Region 2 is pleased to congratulate Ron Schaffner, 9-12 grade teacher at Clinton High School, on winning the Region 2 STEM Educator of the Year Award. Schaffner is a 27-year veteran educator who has been with Clinton Schools since 1994. Schaffner

The award recognizes a consistent record of outstanding teaching and related activities in STEM fields, with a focus on:

- Promoting active learning and imaginative, critical, and independent thinking;
- Developing a love of learning and appreciation for the relationship between STEM-based content and society;
- Building resilience and helping students learn the advantages of “failing forward;”
- Using design process thinking and STEM-based learning experiences’
- Engaging with learners beyond the classroom and creating opportunities to address the individual needs of all learners;
- Using teaching techniques that are appropriate and effective with a wide variety of learning styles.

Schaffner is an inspirational and dedicated teacher who actively promotes science and STEM careers for his students. His nomination highlighted that his classroom fosters a “minds on, hands on” approach to engaging students in a way that has “helped CHS students build the confidence and interest in engineering and science-related higher educational pursuits.”

Schaffner developed Clinton’s first STEM class with two students, which grew into the STEAM CENTER that now provides an indoor laboratory with a portable pool facility for the district’s SeaPerch Underwater Robotics Competition Team, which he also launched.

“Our SeaPerch team had humble beginnings,” shared Schaffner. “The first SeaPerch event went horribly by failing to earn a single point in either of the two pool courses, leading to a great deal of disappointment.”

Instead of giving up, Schaffner used this opportunity to inspire his students. “The graduating seniors wanted to identify where they went wrong and help the following year’s teams do better,” he shared. The following three years would see teams from Clinton’s new STEM class with the Michigan SeaPerch event and proceed to participate in the International SeaPerch Competition.” Clinton Schools now organize and host the Michigan Regional SeaPerch Challenge in partnership with the University of Michigan Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering Department.

The MiSTEM Region 2 Educator of the Year Award includes a \$1000 grant to help increase Schaffner’s impact around STEM education in his classroom and school. Schaffner plans to use some of the grant for critical parts needed for multiple competitions. The rest of the funds will be used to develop activities and promotional materials to engage our younger students in pre, elementary, and middle school to make them aware of STEM opportunities and spark interest for their futures.

“I have seen just how impactful SeaPerch is for middle and high school students. I know from personal experience that we started with two students, no school pool, and no background, and yet with little to no cost, our students thrived in the learning process driven by this academic competition.”

In addition to receiving the \$1,000 grant, Schaffner will be recognized at the MiSTEM Recognition Ceremony (date TBD due to the pandemic).

MiSTEM Region 2 comprises six counties from southeast/south central Michigan, including: Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw Counties. Their work aims to unite education, business, and community partners across the state by creating pathways for all students to consider and pursue high-wage,

high-demand careers. Our mission is to be the catalyst for equitable access and engagement in authentic STEM experiences in every community in Michigan. This is the second year that the MiSTEM Region 2 STEM Educator of the Year and STEM Integration Educator of the Year awards have been given out. Nominations will be accepted for the 2021-22 awards beginning this fall.