

Outstanding Rural Secondary Teacher

Bonnie Smith

Maries Co. R-II School District

Bonnie Smith has been educating young people for the last 24 years in the Maries Co. R-II School District in Belle, Missouri. Mrs. Smith's teaching experiences have been focused in the area of secondary language arts for the past eight years, and prior to that she taught in the elementary building for sixteen year. She made the transition from elementary to high school students and curriculum flawlessly. In fact, she has several of the same students for elementary that she now has in high school English.

Bonnie is a hometown girl who is educating the next generation of her community. She is described as a consummate professional who truly holds herself accountable to student learning. As a former elementary teacher, she has a unique perspective that lends to a better understanding of students and the learning process. Bonnie is committed to results, outcomes, student learning or whatever term you prefer to describe the value added to students through the educational process. Utilizing assessment data to guide instruction, Mrs. Smith's commitment to excellence has produced a renewed sense of accountability within the Belle school district resulting in a dramatic increase in the standardized test scores in English II.

Being one of the most experienced instructors in the high school, Mrs. Smith has been given the opportunity many times to choose what classes and subjects she would like to teach and each time she has chosen to teach the most challenging students – freshman and sophomores. Because of her innovative, effective instructional strategies, a love of learning and great enthusiasm, all translating into student inquiry in the classroom.

Bonnie Smith exemplifies all that is right and good about rural education. A dedicated, thoughtful person, who cares about her school, her community and most importantly her students, makes her Missouri's Outstanding Rural Secondary Teacher for 2011.