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**DATE:**  
April 3, 2024

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## Three Tomah Teachers Share in the Educator of the Year Award From the Tomah Chamber's Annual Awards Banquet

At the Tomah Chamber of Commerce's Annual Awards Banquet, three of our teachers shared the honor of earning the Educator of the Year Award: Katie Pihoda (Middle School Instrumental Music Teacher), Alex Knoepker (High School Band Director) and Jennifer Schraufnagel (High School and Middle School Band Director).

The trio was nominated by the Tomah Concert Association, who had these kind words to say, "These three teachers work simultaneously to instruct the TMS and THS band members. Currently the middle school has 245 band students. For the last two years over 100 sixth graders have bought or rented instruments and began taking band lessons at TMS. THS currently has 113 band members. This is a total of 358 band students in our school district. To my knowledge this is the largest number of band students in any school district in the state of Wisconsin. These Directors go above and beyond to bring wonderful music to Tomah and the surrounding area. They often work after school and on weekends with band students, even giving up some of their summer vacation for a weeklong band camp to teach marching in formations. Our band students often take first place at solo ensemble competition. The bands are so large they have outgrown the band rooms and even the auditorium for concerts. The middle school holds more separate concerts (splitting the band in half) to ensure there is enough room in the auditorium for seating parents and friends. Three cheers for these teachers who give so much of their time and talent to our band students!"

Congratulations Katie, Alex, and Jennifer on this well deserved honor!



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