ELEANOR ROOSEVELT HS TEACHER NAMED AGNES MEYER OUTSTANDING TEACHER

Kenneth Bernstein, a Local, State and National Government and Advanced Placement U.S. Government teacher at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, has been selected to receive The Washington Post's 2010 Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award for Prince George’s County. The Agnes Meyer Award is presented annually to one teacher from each Washington metropolitan area school district.

“Mr. Bernstein understands the individual needs of students, encourages their talents, and fosters their self-esteem,” said Eleanor Roosevelt principal Reginald McNeill. “He demonstrates a true understanding of how students develop and learn, and challenges his students with his creative lessons.”

Bernstein has been teaching at Eleanor Roosevelt High School for the past 11 years. He started working for Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) as an American History, English, and Reading teacher at Kettering Middle School in January 1995.

Bernstein earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Haverford College, a Master of Arts in Religious Studies from Saint Charles Seminary, and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Johns Hopkins University in Secondary Social Studies. He earned National Board Certification in Social Studies in November 2005, the highest level of certification a teacher can receive. Prior to teaching, his career focused on data processing, programming, and analysis.
At Roosevelt, he has served as both Boys and Girls Junior Varsity Soccer Coach, musical director of the Musical Theater, Mock Trial coach, member of the Character Education Committee, co-sponsor for the Class of 2009, and sponsor of the Muslim Students Association.

Bernstein has also taken on leadership roles at his school, serving as the Prince George’s County Educators Association (PGCEA) building representative, and chair of the Philosophy and Goals Subcommittee for the Middle States evaluation of the school. At Kettering Middle School, he was Social Studies Department Chair, Computer Technology Committee Chair, and Multicultural Liaison.

Known as an expert in his field, Bernstein is often approached by local and national groups to provide comments, serve on panels, or give presentations on his areas of expertise. He has served as a member of the Congressional Youth Leadership Council Nominating Committee, a guest lecturer at Bowie State University, a guest blogger for The New York Times, a panelist for the Yearlykos Convention, a presenter at the Maryland State Educators Association’s Annual Convention, and a facilitator for the Maryland council for the Social Studies.

"I believe that unless the United States can maintain vibrant and viable public schools, we run a real risk that our experiment in democracy will fail. Like Jefferson, I believe that democracy cannot function successfully without an informed and participatory citizenry," said Bernstein. "As a teacher, I believe that all students can show mastery of every subject at some level (thank you Jerome Bruner for this idea), that students have different kinds of minds/intelligence (thanks, Howard Gardner), and should be expected to succeed. I'm still learning what it means to be a teacher, as I am still learning what it means to be a human being."

The Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Awards were established to recognize dedicated teachers who have shown initiative, creativity, and professionalism. Winners are nominated by members of the community and selected by their individual school systems. This year’s winners will be celebrated on May 11 during a gala awards ceremony hosted by The Washington Post.

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