

# ASTA CELEBRATES AZ 2020 SCIENCE TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

The [Arizona Science Teachers Association](#) has announced its winners for the 2020 Teacher of the Year Awards. The winning teachers have demonstrated the scientific attitudes, skills, and knowledge to guide students in 21st Century learning and STEM education in Arizona. Their classroom practices and leadership have singled them out as highly effective teachers of science.

## **Novice Science Teacher of the Year - Ethan McBride**

**Ethan McBride** is an amazing person and does a superb job of connecting with his students, especially those that are disconnected, considered at risk, or struggle with emotional and behavioral issues. As an accomplished vocalist and musician, he incorporates the arts into his instruction and has a remarkable ability to accommodate all types of learners. Not only is Ethan in his first years as a classroom teacher, he is also completing a graduate degree in Biological Sciences at Clemson University. His authentic scientific knowledge is applied not only in his classroom but also as a content expert mentor in the science department. He is a gifted young teacher and will do tremendous work in the field of education for years to come.



Thank you Rosario Rodolfo from [PASCO](#) and [Educational Innovations](#) for sponsoring the Novice Science Teacher of the Year award.



## **Elementary Science Teacher of the Year – Danielle Swartz**

The Innovation Academy K-5 public STEM School Science Teacher, **Danielle Swartz** was named the Elementary Science Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Danielle Swartz excites and engages 1st grade students by integrating science and engineering themes and projects into reading, writing and math instruction. By focusing on the 5E STEM Education model, Mrs. Swartz's students regularly have the highest achievement scores in the district. She incorporates the engineering design process and scientific inquiry masterfully creating an authentic learning experience in her classroom. The 1st grade scientists in Mrs. Swartz learning lab are going to be the problem solvers and critical thinkers of tomorrow. Beyond the classroom Danielle mentors others by serving on the STEMAZing.org teacher leader corp and by designing and facilitating workshops for other teachers.

Thank you [Discovery Education](#) and [Educational Innovations](#) for sponsoring the Elementary School Science Teacher of the Year award.

## **Middle School Science Teacher of the Year**

**Melissa Wilburn** has taught 6th grade at Quail Run for 14 years and has over 20 years teaching experience. Melissa brings in experts and real world experiences to her students including representatives from SARSEF and Tucson Electric Power. At the district level, Melissa is the Code to the Future Coordinator, serves on the science committee, is the science fair coordinator, and supports training on the new science standards. State-wide and beyond, she is a STEMAZing.org Teacher Leader who started a project to virtualize an Orientation to Group Work unit from Stanford University. The resulting virtual unit has been accessed by nearly 1000 teachers, including one from Ammon, Jordan who reached out to say thank you. Mrs. Wilburn's commitment to pursue excellence in the field of education is unparalleled and she will continue to make a difference in the world of STEM.



Thank you Jeff Golner from [STEM Sports](#) and [Educational Innovations](#) for sponsoring the Middle School Science Teacher of the Year award.



### **High School Science Teacher of the Year**

Cienega High School Science Teacher **Lisa Baker** is named the 2020 High School Science Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Baker is one of those educators who stand out as a leader both inside and outside her classroom. Not only is she an amazing high school science teacher for Cienega High School; she is also the teacher for all 6-8 students at the Vail Innovation Center, the online Vail District program, and she is the online teacher for all students taking Chemistry, Ecology, and Biology. Lisa serves as the science department Instructional Team Leader, a Cognitive Coach for new teachers, the site collaborative content meeting leader and as a member of the district science curriculum team. Her drive to instill a science mindset has led to implementation of the Girls Who Code/SHETECH club, the celebration of Chemistry Week, and an increase in dual enrollment science course offerings. In addition to all of these commitments, she has also worked as the site science coordinator for Corona Foothills and Cienega over the years and is always looking to improve these programs. Lisa Baker leads by example and works to provide the best learning opportunities for all of our students.

Thank you [Argument Driven Inquiry](#) and [Educational Innovations](#) for sponsoring the High School Science Teacher of the Year award.

### **Congratulations to the 2020 Honorable Mention Awardees:**

- **Novice Science Teachers** - **Jame Tobin** from Imagine Desert West and **Shelley Wermuth** from Dove Mountain K-8 School.
- **Elementary Science Teacher** – **Martha Bishop** from Twin Peaks K-8 School
- **Middle School Science Teacher** – **Lauren Marlatt** from Coronado K-8 School
- **High School Science Teacher** – **Kevin Mart** from Young Public School

All awardees were honored by the Arizona Science Teachers Association on November 21, 2020 at the [virtual annual ASTA Meeting](#).

