

NAME Michael Spangler
CATEGORY Teacher
SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME Kankakee Area Regional Vocational Education System
SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER EFE 320000000464600

THOSE WHO EXCEL

Education Awards Program 2011-2012 Application



Illinois

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Illinois State Board of Education
Public Information
100 North First Street • Springfield, IL 62777-0001 • 217/782-4648

Section 1 – Nominator's Recommendation

May 31, 2011

Illinois State Board of Education
Those Who Excel Teacher Awards Committee
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777

Re: Letter of Nomination for ISBE Teacher of the Year – Michael Spangler

Please accept this letter as my official nomination for Michael Spangler to be named ISBE's Teacher of the Year.

As Director of the EFE System, Kankakee Area Regional Vocational Education System and the Kankakee Area Career Center, I have known Michael Spangler for nine (9) years. When I first arrived as Director, I witnessed Mr. Spangler getting kids to weld. As the years have progressed, Mr. Spangler has continued to develop as a teacher and has become, what I believe, is truly a *great* teacher.

Welding has become a "tool" for Mr. Spangler to utilize in teaching his students much, much more than welding. Mr. Spangler is able to lead young men and women beyond academics, and helps make them successful adults.

Our motto at the Kankakee Area Career Center is "*Preparing Students For Tomorrow.*" Mr. Spangler's ability to teach touches all the parts of student development, i.e.: critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, academics, technical skills, teamwork, etc. He has a long history of extremely successful alumni, many of whom come back to the Career Center, allowing our current students to see the potential for a bright future. Many of these alumni, and they

admit it freely when they return, would not have been as successful had they not had Mr. Spangler for a teacher. He has opened many, many doors for his students.

The reason Mr. Spangler is an exceptional teacher is not because he is great at writing lesson plans and developing curriculum, it is because he cares about the development of his students, both while they are here in our school and long after they have graduated.

As you will discover as you read the various letters of recommendation, there is a constant theme, Mr. Spangler so inspires his students, they follow him on to Kankakee Community College, many while they are attending our school, making the sacrifice to spend their Saturday mornings in his class at the college, after being with him all week long here at the Career Center. He truly has the heart of a teacher.

Academically, his students thrive. He incorporates math, science and writing assignments into his welding curriculum. He has also included geography into his classes while building a globe project. This year, he and his class designed and built a working model of a Ferris wheel. The geometry involved in the design process and then presentation at our State CTE Lobby Day in Springfield is proof his students' academic involvement.

Mr. Spangler doesn't just care about his program, he cares about all the programs here at the Career Center. He has worked with teachers on many cross-curriculum projects. In fact, our Drafting/Computer Aided Drafting Instructor commented he utilized Mr. Spangler's welding class so his students could gain "valuable information and knowledge about proper welding drafting.

Mr. Spangler seeks out opportunities for his students outside of the Kankakee Area Career Center. He has been able to orchestrate scholarship opportunities through the American Welding Society, Developed a Welding Rodeo at the local community college, where our

Michael Spangler

students compete against professional pipefitters (and win). Mr. Spangler brings post-secondary education representatives to speak to his students so they know the variety of opportunities they have available.

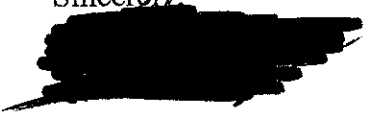
Oftentimes, people are either misinformed or uninformed about Career and Technical Education (CTE). Teachers, like Mr. Spangler, should be recognized, not just because he is truly an exceptional teacher, but also because he is proof of how a CTE class, such as welding, can lead a student down the path to great success.

As you review all the information contained in this packet of information, I am confident you will agree, Mr. Spangler is not only deserving of being named Teacher of the Year, he will also be an enormous benefit to others throughout the State of Illinois, as an example of incorporating academics, technical skills and professional development of our youth today.

Michael Spangler is one of *Those Who Excel!*

Thank you very much in advance for your consideration of this nomination of Michael Spangler, Welding Instructor at the Kankakee Area Career Center.

Sincerely,



Donald Fay
Director



KANKAKEE AREA CAREER CENTER

Michael Spangler

P.O. Box 570
4083 N. 1000W Road
Bourbonnais, Illinois 60914
Tel: (815) 939-4971
Fax: (815) 939-7598
www.kacc-il.org

TEACHER RECOMMENDATION

Don Fay
Director

Bosa Goodale
Principal

Matthew Kelley
Assistant Principal

May 26, 2011

Illinois State Board of Education
Those Who Excel Teacher Awards Committee
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777

Beecher
Unit 200 U

Herscher
Unit 2

Kankakee
District 111

Momence
Unit 1

St. Anne
District 302

Central
Unit 4

Grant Park
Unit 6

Manteno
Unit 5

Peotone
Unit 207 U

Bradley-
Bourbonnais
District 307

Re: Letter of Recommendation for ISBE Teacher of the Year - Mike Spangler

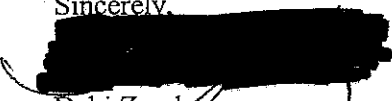
It has been my honor to work with Mike Spangler at Kankakee Area Career Center for the past 8 years, 6 of those as a fellow career and technical education teacher. Not only does Mike inspire his students to *want* to learn, he is an example to coworkers of how to bring collaboration and passion for a career to life in the classroom. His students, their parents, and his industry partners all benefit from his knowledge of welding, and his belief that every student is reachable if we all work together to help them discover and set goals to achieve their dreams.

Mike has a very straightforward, honest approach to teaching that really gets through to his students. I had the chance to see that first hand this year in a collaborative project Mike and I did with our students. As the Business teacher here, my classroom is very different from Mike's Welding class. Our students are about as opposite in learning styles as you can get. My students delve into the impact merchandising has on profit, while his students don welding jackets and "iron man" hoods to melt steel with argon gas. But Mike saw our differences as a chance for the students on both sides to learn.

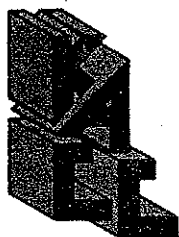
To better prepare his students for their SkillsUSA qualifying exam, he asked me if we could work together on the history and etiquette portions of the test, since his knowledge of these areas was limited. We combined our classes once a week for about 10 weeks and had the Business students teach the Welding students. In return, my students got to spend a day in the Welding class. Watching Mike in action as a teacher was a lesson in itself for me. He related easily to them, and took the science of welding out of the textbook and into the real world. I also noticed the level of respect his students have for his position and his knowledge, demonstrated in how they approached the role of teacher when were given the chance to be the "teacher" and share what they had learned to me and my students.

Collaborating is common for Mike, whether it is with other teachers in the building, with parents, with former students who come back to share their success stories, or with his many business partners who come out to work with his class and assess the technical skill level of his students for job readiness in the welding industry. To Mike, we are *all* partners in the education of our youth, and he demonstrates through action the power our combined efforts bring to the classroom. He is a deserving recipient of this award, because he exemplifies that excellence in teaching is proven not through our success, but through the successes of the students whose lives we are fortunate enough to share for this brief time as a teacher.

Sincerely,


Debi Zurek
Instructor, Business Management & Technology

Providing **Career and Technical Opportunities** to students
in a multi-county area.



KANKAKEE AREA CAREER CENTER

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Don Fay
Director

Bosa Goodale
Principal

Matthew Kelley
Assistant Principal

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

Michael Spangler

May 31, 2011

Beecher
Unit 200 U

Herscher
Unit 2

Kankakee
District 111

Momence
Unit 1

St. Anne
District 302

Central
Unit 4

Grant Park
Unit 6

Manteno
Unit 5

Peotone
Unit 207 U

Bradley-
Bourbonnais
District 307

Illinois State Board of Education
Those Who Excel Teacher Awards Committee
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777

Re: Letter of Recommendation for ISBE Teacher of the Year – Michael Spangler

As the Assistant Principal / Special Populations Coordinator of the Kankakee Area Career Center, it gives me great pleasure to write this letter to recommend the aforementioned, Michael Spangler, Welding Instructor at Kankakee Area Career Center, to be named the 37th Annual State Board of Education Those Who Excel/Teacher of the Year Program for 2011-2012.

Just this week, I am completed my second full year in this position. I have known Mr. Spangler since 2009. I first met him during the summer before the school year began. It is because of what I have witnessed from Mr. Spangler that leads me to writing this letter in strong support for Mr. Spangler.

Mr. Spangler has the all qualities of a great educator should. He has a passion for not only teaching but mentoring his students. Throughout his career, Mr. Spangler worked for Chicago Bridge and Iron in Bourbonnais Illinois (25 years) and chose to pass on his knowledge of welding on to high school juniors and seniors. He also teaches welding part-time at Kankakee Community College (KCC). He encourages all of his students to continue their education and enter post-secondary training. Many of his students actually give up their Saturday mornings just to take Mr. Spangler's college level course all while attending the Career Center.

Mr. Spangler has the talent and knack to make his classroom a real-world experience which is realistic, fun, and a welcoming place where all students can learn in a safe and friendly environment.

Mr. Spangler does an excellent job of integrating academics into his Career and Technical Education class. He shows his students just how combining reading, math, and science makes welding possible. He does an exceptional job of working with other teachers in creating interdisciplinary units in order to help others understand the complexity of welding and how core academic subjects intertwine with one another.

Providing **Career and Technical Opportunities** to students
in a multi-county area.

Mr. Spangler has consistently exemplified these great qualities over the last 15 years. I have talked to both past and current students of Mr. Spangler. They all have the resounding response of singing his praises.

Mr. Spangler encompasses the true definition of what it means to be a life-long learner. After 15 years, Mr. Spangler's zest for teaching is still as strong as the day he started. Mr. Spangler is an extraordinary teacher with a strong work ethic and a fantastic sense of humor.

Mr. Spangler has a natural talent for helping students with varying learning styles, cultural backgrounds, behaviors, and abilities. He takes the time to relate to each of his students on a personal level. He has the ability to teach students in such a way that the students do not even realize the complexity of the task. Mr. Spangler conveys the material in such a natural manner that all of his students gain confidence easily. Mr. Spangler believes that each student is as unique in their learning as their personality. In his approach to teaching, the total child is considered in facilitating their learning.

As I walk around and observe Mr. Spangler's classroom and teaching style I learn new things every time I step foot in his shop.

Furthermore, Mr. Spangler shows great compassion for teaching and educating our area youth. He is so personable and forthcoming with students, parents, and staff that many of his achievements go unnoticed. Despite the overflowing praise from those who know him, Mr. Spangler remains humble. Mr. Spangler is easily one of the best teachers I have met in my ten years in education. I wish when I was a first-year teacher, I had Mr. Spangler as my mentor.

I feel privileged to be working at the Kankakee Area Career Center along side with Mr. Spangler. He is an innovator, mentor, and a leader. He is continually sharing ideas, helping colleagues, sharing teaching strategies with his peers, mentoring, and he works very hard to educate his students.

It is for all of these reasons that it is my honor to recommend Mr. Mike Spangler as our State's 37th Annual State Board of Education Those Who Excel/Teacher of the Year for 2011-2012.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of Mr. Spangler. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or want additional information.

Respectfully submitted,


Matthew Kelley
Assistant Principal
Special Populations Coordinator

**American Welding Society
Joliet/Aurora/Kankakee Section**

May 25, 2011

Awards Selection Committee
Kankakee Area Career Center

RE: Mr. Michael Spangler Candidate for Teacher of the Year

Dear Committee:

Please be aware that it has been my distinct pleasure to know Mike Spangler both professionally and socially for nearly four decades. During that time, I have witnessed Mike's dedication to the welding industry and in particular to his students at the Career Center. Mike has been a dedicated member of the American Welding Society and an Officer of the Joliet/Aurora/Kankakee Section for many years. In his capacity as a JAK Section Officer Mike has been instrumental in helping KACC graduates apply for and receive thousands of dollars in scholarships from the American Welding Society District #13. Mike helped establish the AWS JAK student chapter and regularly reminds the student's of the advantages of participating in the American Welding Society and other professional organizations. Mike's KACC Welding Program students have gone on to become key individuals in nearly every construction trade and manufacturing facility in our community. Mike initiated the annual KACC welding competition as part of his training curriculum where students compete for cash prizes under the real world pressure of professional welding inspectors, manufacturers, distributors, professional welders and their own parents.

As the Apprentice Training Coordinator for Ironworkers' Local 465, I engaged Mike to help train our Ironworker welders to the American Welding Society's Bridge Welding Code. The AWS Bridge Welding Code is one of the most stringent welding codes in existence due to the fracture critical forces experienced in reversal of load structures. It was my responsibility to monitor Mike's work and confirm that his methods produced the required results in our apprentices' skills. My observations revealed that Mike is an intuitive, patient and safety conscious instructor. Many of those same apprentices have gone on to be some of the premier welders in our local union. In fact, four of those Ironworker apprentices competed at the Chicago District Council of Ironworkers competition and one of those apprentices, Mr. Michael Bradley went on to compete in the Ironworkers National Apprenticeship Competition and finished in the top ten of over 350 competitors from the USA and Canada, thanks in no small part to Mike Spangler's mentoring.

Please give Mr. Mike Spangler serious consideration for the Kankakee Area Career Center's award for Instructor of the year. He has served our industry, our community and his students with the utmost professionalism and true compassion, to which we all encourage our student to aspire. Mr. Michael Spangler is truly a great teacher!

Thank You,


John A Willard
AWS JAK Section
Treasurer

Mr. Mike Spangler

Those Who Excel
Teacher of the Year
Letter of Recommendation (Parent)

We are proud and honored to nominate Mr. Mike Spangler for Illinois Teacher of the Year. His integrity, positive influence, and motivational skills have made quite an impression on his students, especially our son, Grant. When Grant started his first year at our area career center, he had an interest in welding. As the days went by, he would come home from school with exciting stories about his welding teacher. Day after day, his eyes lit up when he talked about Mr. Spangler. By the time parent/teacher conferences came, we couldn't wait to meet him. Within minutes of our meeting, we knew exactly why Grant was excited. From our first meeting we could tell Mr. Spangler was that one in a million teacher, who teaches the kids that hard work is what it takes to succeed in today's world and to take pride in their work. He also teaches this by example. His patience allows him to teach to students of multiple academic levels so each can advance their own skills.

Mr. Spangler is a teacher who appreciates his students, so there is mutual respect between teacher and student. He is easy to talk to and relates well with the kids. He has been a mentor to many students. A former welding student is a supervisor at an area manufacturing facility. Grant works there now, too, and their boss is very impressed with both of their skills and their work ethic. Mr. Spangler has taken the life lessons he has learned and passes them on to his students and relates to them in a special way.

In addition to his positive influences, he is an incredible motivator. During Grant's time with him, Grant has realized welding is his passion. He will be going to college for a degree in Engineering in Welding Technology. He will start at our community college in which he will be lucky enough to have Mr. Spangler as a teacher again. Interestingly, Grant and several other Career Center students have already taken a four credit hour welding class on their own with Mr. Spangler as

their teacher. Mr. Spangler mentioned he was teaching a Saturday class at the college, and several students signed up- every Saturday for a whole semester, starting at 8:00 am! Now that's inspirational! He also encouraged Grant and others to apply for scholarships through the American Welding Society.

We are very thankful and appreciative for all the efforts Mr. Spangler has given his students. They will carry the life lessons he has taught them forever, whether it was the welding skill they mastered, or the lessons they learned from his integrity as a man who looks out for his students. It is humbling and admirable to find a teacher who can make such a positive difference in his students' lives.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Eric and Mary Anne Johnson

Mr. Mike Spangler

Those Who Excel
Teacher of the Year
Letter of Recommendation
(Student)

There is a lot that can be said about Mr. Spangler, but, all I can say is he has been my inspiration and guide for the past school year. I chose to take the welding class because my brother took it. I had a little interest, but Mr. Spangler got me very excited to learn and got me looking more towards a career in the industry. Mr. Spangler has taught me so much so I guess I will start from the beginning of the year to the very end. From day one he preached a lot about safety in the work place and was extremely strict about wearing safety glasses at all times in the shop. From there it was on to my favorite part of the class, stick welding. It's what I consider my specialty due to the fact that I worked very hard for a majority of the year to reach a high skill level. With the encouragement of Mr. Spangler, I chose to take a Saturday college class at KCC that made me a step ahead of most in my class. From there, he taught and explained to me how to do a plate that could be bend tested, With his help, I did my first bend test and was surprised by how good I did. He has taught me more then I thought I could learn in one year and I have the utmost respect for him. He is now a man that I idolize and he has inspired me to purse a career teaching welding. He is honestly just a great all around guy who takes more time then most to teach. He loves his job and makes kids excited about learning this great trade. I truly believe Mr. Spangler deserves to be recognized as Teacher of the Year.



Eric Janssen