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Sarasota County Teacher of the Year is Riverview High Coach BJ Ivey

SARASOTA, April 5, 2017 – Riverview High School social studies teacher and basketball coach **William “BJ” Ivey Jr.** was named 2017 Sarasota County Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made by Superintendent Todd Bowden at the annual lunch celebration. The district’s High School Teacher of the Year was selected for the top honor from among three finalists at the annual awards ceremony honoring educators, held today at Michael’s On East in Sarasota.

The other finalists were Holly Houghton-Brown, Tatum Ridge Elementary School fourth-grade teacher and the district’s Elementary School Teacher of the Year; and Christine Braun, Pine View School social studies teacher, the district’s Middle School Teacher of the Year. The individual Teachers of the Year for each school also were honored at the event. A partnership of the Education Foundation of Sarasota County and the Sarasota County School District produces the event.

When revealed as Teacher of the Year, Ivey hoisted the award like a basketball trophy. Education Foundation of Sarasota County President Jennifer Vigne compared the moment of victory to the thrills of “March Madness,” the NCAA’s annual collegiate basketball championship series. During the program, Dick Steinman, professional development specialist for the district and selection committee member, noted Ivey “is not just a basketball coach, but a life coach.”

Accepting the award, Ivey said of his students, “I pray every day to have a positive impact on these kids.” He added that, while he is honored to be named Teacher of the Year, “I really don’t even believe I’m the best teacher in my own *home*. That would be my wife, Samantha, who teaches fifth-grade math and science at Lakewood Elementary.”

Ivey also talked about the influence of his mother, Jo Ivey, who attended the celebration. A retired district teacher who coached cheerleading and taught Spanish at Riverview, Jo Ivey was a past Teacher of the Year at that school and was National Cheerleading Coach of the Year.

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District Teacher of the Year to be named, contd.

BJ Ivey is a native of Sarasota who has taught at Riverview for 11 years. His subjects have included social studies, International Baccalaureate World History Honors and Advance Placement Psychology. He has served as the head coach for both the girls and boys basketball teams during his time at Riverview, as well as the Nike Team Florida basketball coach. He was named Florida Association of Basketball Coaches Class 8A Coach of the Year in 2016. Ivey earned a bachelor's degree history from the University of South Florida and a master's degree in education curriculum and instruction from National Louis University in Tampa.

About Teacher of the Year

The Teacher of the Year program recognizes educators in Sarasota County who exemplify dedication to student learning and innovative instruction. The program is co-produced by the Sarasota County School District and the Education Foundation of Sarasota County and is made possible through the funding and support of community partners. The district Teacher of the Year will receive a \$2,500 cash award from the Education Foundation, sponsored by Sunset Automotive Group; the two runners-up will each receive \$1,250. The district Teacher of the Year will represent Sarasota County Schools at the Florida Department of Education-Macy's Teacher of the Year program and will serve as a spokesperson for and representative of the teaching profession at various events until the next district Teacher of the Year is chosen. Due to a change in the timeline, the next Teacher of the Year will be named in December 2017.

About the Education Foundation of Sarasota County

The Education Foundation of Sarasota County is a supporting partner that exponentially enhances the educational experiences available to the children of Sarasota County. Its mission is to strengthen the community by investing in educational opportunities for the students, teachers, and schools. The Foundation works to match donor's passions with high-impact projects and initiatives that help every child in Sarasota County rise to their full potential. It achieves this mission through scholarships, access to advanced technology, supplies needed for creativity to flourish, and funds for educators' professional development. The Education Foundation of Sarasota County and its philanthropic investors are champions for students, teachers, and schools. For more information on the Education Foundation of Sarasota County, call 941.927.0965 or visit EdFoundationSRQ.org.

PHOTO CAPTIONS (additional photos on request):

1. Riverview High School educator William "BJ" Ivey Jr. was named the 2017 Sarasota County Schools Teacher of the Year April 5.
2. Pictured from left at the Teacher of the Year event are Sarasota County Schools Professional Development Specialist Dick Steinman, Teacher of the Year William "BJ" Ivey, Superintendent Todd Bowden and Education Foundation of Sarasota County President Jennifer Vigne.

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