



For Immediate Release
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Gulf Coast Educators FCU Awards 2021 Appreciated Teachers



Pictured above: Akash Patel, GCEFCU's 2021 Appreciated Teacher of the Year, GCEFCU's Business Development Team, and Dallas ISD Administrative Staff

Pasadena, TX: On May 17, 2021, Gulf Coast Educators FCU announced the finalists and grand prize winner of their annual Appreciated Teacher Awards. Since 2012 the credit union has used this recognition program to highlight the exceptional work that dedicated teachers do for their students, schools, and communities. Since the credit union's statewide expansion, they decided to make this year's Appreciated Teachers Awards bigger and better than previous years.

At the commence of the program, only educators within Harris, Galveston, and Brazoria counties were eligible to win. Each recipient was given a \$100 honorarium and their school was given a \$100 donation. The credit union decided this year to select five finalists, and let the public decide which of those should be awarded the "2021 Appreciated Teacher of the Year" title. The finalist with the most votes received a \$2,500 grand prize and the remaining four finalists each received a \$500 honorarium. The Appreciated Teacher of the Year finalists for 2021 are listed below:

Akash Patel- Ignite Middle School, Dallas ISD
Arlevia Davis- Legacy High School, Mansfield ISD
Cathy Knauff- Klein Cain High School, Klein ISD
Margaret Olivarez- Copperfield Elementary, Pflugerville ISD



Terri Pitts- Colonial Hills Elementary, North East ISD

2021 was the first year that the credit union included all teachers within the state of Texas to be nominated. As a result, they received 1,300 nominations from over 167 school districts across the state. A committee composed of credit union employees read through the nominations received and narrowed it down to the five finalists. The finalists were then displayed on their website during Teacher Appreciation Week and their voting period became available for the public to choose their top favorite. In total, the credit union received 3,194 votes. Mr. Akash Patel received the most votes, winning with a grand total of 1,187, making him Gulf Coast Educators FCU's 2021 Appreciated Teacher of the Year.

The nomination process for their Appreciated Teacher awards begins in March and runs through mid-April. At that time, teachers in the state of Texas can be nominated by parents, peers, and community members to receive recognition for all the outstanding work they do both in and out the classroom. As teaching has evolved so drastically within the last year, GCEFCU wants teachers to know how much they are valued, not only by them, but also by the people and community they impact daily. To learn more about this year's Appreciated Teacher Award grand prize winner and the other four finalists, or see past recipients, please visit www.appreciatedteachers.com.

About Gulf Coast Educators FCU: In 1948, eleven Pasadena ISD educators got together and formed what today remains a credit union dedicated to serving the financial needs of school employees in the state of Texas. The credit union offers its member-owners a full line of banking services, but through a cooperative ownership structure. To learn more about the credit union, visit www.gcefcu.org.