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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mora Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence

Chris Goebel, a teacher at Mora Elementary in the Mora Public Schools, was surprised March 21 with news that he is a recipient of a 2018 WEM Outstanding Educator Award as an Athletic Coach, an honor that is accompanied by a \$15,000 award.

Goebel is one of six educators being honored by the WEM Foundation and Synergy & Leadership Exchange for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student learning. His recognition comes in the Athletic Coach Award, which recognizes teachers who are exemplary coaches of athletic teams.

Goebel has been teaching and coaching for 17 years. He currently teaches fifth grade and is the head coach of the Mora High School cross country and track and field teams.

According to Principal Brent Nelson, "Chris Goebel cares more about developing his athletes into successful, well-rounded individuals than he cares about wins and losses. One example of this is how he starts each season. Instead of just requiring each student to write out a track goal or a cross country goal, he makes his athletes reflect on developing their character. They write a family goal, a school goal, and a personal goal. Goebel revisits these throughout the season to hold students accountable."

The programs Goebel coaches has grown from 30 to 80 students participating. The boys' cross country team has qualified for State Cross Country 12 straight years, and the girls' team has qualified three times. During that time period, the boys have won three Class A State Championships and have produced multiple All-State Athletes.

Goebel recognizes the lessons running can teach his athletes, but is quick to point out their academics will take them further in life. Once a week his teams have a short practice and then the students gather in his classroom to do homework. He feels the homework nights are very beneficial to the program. It allows the junior high runners a chance to see what a student athlete looks like. They have the opportunity to watch high achieving students work.

Goebel shares, "Watching role models study and do homework is the best way to show how to value academics and it doesn't matter how fast or slow in running you might be."

"Coach Goebel cares deeply about each of his athletes, and wants nothing but to better their lives, and help them find the complete enjoyment that running can bring to them. Coach Goebel's passion for coaching and teaching spills over and can't help but infect the lives of those around him," said a student.

In addition to the Athletic Coach Award, other educators are being honored with the Academic Challenge Coach Award (teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams that participate and compete in academic challenges), Ethics in Education Award (exemplary educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum) and the Teacher Achievement Award (exemplary teachers who support, inspire, and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement).

Educators are first nominated for the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards program by students, parents, colleagues or community members. Those who accept the nomination provide additional information for consideration by Synergy & Leadership Exchange and a blue ribbon selection panel, which reviews and ranks the nominees. In addition to the six statewide honorees, additional educators have been selected as regional honorees for 2018. These names will be announced in May.

Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, providing educational resources, and celebrating achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities. For more information on the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program and Synergy & Leadership Exchange, visit: www.synergyexchange.org.