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**For Immediate Release**

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## **LONGTIME BOARD EMPLOYEE RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARD**

Patty Sanchez, the Idaho State Board of Education’s academic affairs program manager, received national recognition today as the winner of an annual award presented by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) Association.

Sanchez is the recipient of this year’s [David L. Wright Memorial Award](#), named in honor of a former leader in higher education both in Tennessee and in Florida and is given to only one person in the entire country. The award recognizes Sanchez’s exceptional commitment, her strong work ethic, and her outstanding contributions to the Idaho State Board of Education.

Sanchez has worked at the Board office for nearly 30 years, serving in a number of positions. She was named academic affairs program manager 13 years ago. Her duties include ensuring that program proposals, academic planning and policy processes are followed and properly managed. She also supports Board members and colleagues in the State Board office, and in the higher education institutions.

“I started my career working in a Head Start program for the children of migrant workers and realized then how education can improve and change lives. I developed a passion for education because of what I witnessed and experienced there,” Sanchez said. “When I moved to the Board office, I wanted to expand on what I had learned and effectively support various education-related initiatives to make education accessible for all. I’m overwhelmed to have received this award and humbled by what it stands for. I am truly honored.”

“Patty is deeply committed to the power of education to change lives,” State Board Executive Director Matt Freeman said. “She has a prodigious work ethic and is a gentle and humble leader. She is also incredibly generous with her time and resources – volunteering to lead various philanthropic campaigns that give back to our community. I cannot think of a person more worthy to receive this prestigious award in recognition of Patty’s extraordinary service to Idaho.”

Patty was nominated for the award by the Board’s current and three past chief academic officers, with whom she worked with over the span of nearly a decade.

“Shortly after I was hired, I contacted a former chief academic officer for advice,” Board Chief Academic Officer TJ Bliss said. “Her main suggestion to me was to ‘rely on Patty, she will make our life easier and your work more successful.’ I have found this to be true, on nearly a daily basis. Patty is the epitome of what it means to be a dedicated public servant.”

Here's a link to the SHEEO press release announcing the award:

<https://sheeo.org/sheeo-announces-excellence-awards-recipients-2/>

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