



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MEDIA ALERT – Friday, March 11, 2022
Fargo Public School District #1

CROSS NAMED FARGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2022 SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR



South High School Lead Custodian Joel Cross has been named Fargo Public Schools Support Staff of the Year. FPS Superintendent Dr. Rupak Gandhi and South High School Principal Dr. Todd Bertsch made the announcement today during a staff meeting.

Cross has served on the maintenance team at South High School for 15 years. First hired in a part-time capacity in 2007, Cross proved reliable and was hired full time in March of 2008. Cross has performed in multiple roles at South throughout the years, including custodian, assistant engineer, head assistant engineer, evening assistant engineer and now lead custodian. In 2018 his standout work, professionalism, and dependability were recognized as he was

promoted into his current role.

As lead custodian, Cross manages the maintenance staff in a professional and effective manner and oversees the maintenance and operation of a large school building. He sets and communicates schedules for South's custodial staff, meets regularly with the staff to set duties and expectations, trains custodial staff in cleaning and use of equipment, communicates with South administration and staff to fulfill their needs, conducts inspections of cleaning areas, and keeps cleaning supplies in stock. Cross ensures that South remains a clean and pleasant learning environment for the school's students and staff.

Cross' selection as Support Staff of the Year is a reflection of his integral role at South High School. Cross is described as a hard worker with a "can do" attitude, willing to go far above and beyond the call of duty. He is known by his colleagues as the "Most Valuable Custodian," South's hardest worker, and a staple at South High School. Despite being stretched thin with a limited staff, he is fully willing to do what it takes to make sure students, staff and guests have access to a clean and functional building. His nominators say he never complains and always shows up promptly and is willing to help them accomplish the tasks that need to be done. He is described as a very conscientious, organized, humble and passionate individual. His willingness to go above and beyond over the years is not limited to his maintenance duties. He has enthusiastically agreed to grill at senior picnics and DJ school events.

Cross is described as a problem solver, always searching for ways to improve the condition of the school. He puts in the time and effort to explore new processes, products and technologies to help his team adapt and improve within an ever-changing environment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he has been open to any changes necessary to ensure the safety and comfort of South's students and staff. When confronted with new protocols or activities necessitated by the evolution of the pandemic, he has been ready to attack the challenges with ferocity to serve those within the school.

Cross follows FPS District Office Human Resources Absence Manager Brenda Fisher as the Support Staff of the Year honoree. The Fargo Public Schools Support Staff of the Year award has been presented within the District since 2014. The honor is an award regularly bestowed as part of the District's annual Staff Recognition Program. The District also annually recognizes a Teacher of the Year and an Administrator of the Year.

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