Portland, Ore. – December 10, 2018 – The 2018 State Teachers of the Year share personal and powerful stories that crystallize the importance of teaching in the third season of the podcast series “Leading from the Classroom,” launching today on TeacherPodcasts.org. The educators speak as advocates and ambassadors for their students, for the teaching profession, and to influence meaningful education policy change.

The 48-part series is produced by NWEA, the not-for-profit provider of assessment solutions. New episodes, each about 3–5 minutes, will be released twice a week through the end of January. Listeners can subscribe to the podcast to be alerted of new episodes. The first six episodes releasing this week — three today, December 10th, and three Wednesday, December 12th — are:

- **Washington** and National Teacher of the Year Mandy Manning shares the story of an 18-year-old refugee student and mother who needed a little extra support to overcome extraordinary circumstances and reach her potential.
- **Oklahoma** Teacher of the Year Jon Hazell touchingly recounts how his late father inspired him to change career paths and become a teacher.
- **Indiana** Teacher of the Year Jerome Flewelling explains how learning and teaching became an exciting journey once he shifted his approach to engage and challenge his students.
- **Louisiana** Teacher of the Year Kimberly Eckert reveals how two very different students helped define her approach to teaching and a new practice she calls “Genius Hour.”
- **South Carolina** Teacher of the Year Erin Fox describes how her experience at Space Camp pushed her out of her comfort zone and inspired her to create a summer literacy program in her district.
- **Georgia** Teacher of the Year John Tibbetts discusses why he’s challenging his fellow educators to focus less on teacher evaluations and more on innovation and student achievement.

“We created this series to give parents, policymakers, prospective teachers, and the public a deeper understanding of the commitment teachers have to their work and their students,” said Katie Topping, EVP Communications and Marketing, NWEA. “These inspiring stories should compel us to better support teachers and our systems of education. Our children, and ultimately our communities, reap the rewards.”
“It is powerful to hear these exceptional educators share in their own words what fuels and inspires them,” said Carissa Moffat Miller, Executive Director of CCSSO. “Their dedication to students, and their profession, is admirable and relentless. It’s CCSSO’s honor to support these educators through the National Teacher of the Year program.”

NWEA is a partner of the National Teacher of the Year program run by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The national program identifies exceptional teachers throughout the country and recognizes their effective work in the classroom and the community. During their tenure, Teachers of the Year engage in diverse professional learning opportunities, amplify their voices, participate in policy discussions, and serve as champions for all students.

TeacherPodcasts.org includes headshots of the State Teachers of the Year as well as more information on the “Leading from the Classroom” series and the National Teacher of the Year program. For the latest updates on the “Leading from the Classroom” podcast series on social media, follow the hashtag #ntoy18.

About NWEA
NWEA® is a mission-driven, not-for-profit organization that supports students and educators worldwide by creating assessment solutions that precisely measure growth and proficiency—and provide insights to help tailor instruction. Educators in more than 10,000 schools, districts, and education agencies in 141 countries rely on our flagship interim assessment, MAP® Growth™; our progress monitoring and skills mastery tool, MAP® Skills™; and our reading fluency and comprehension assessment, MAP® Reading Fluency™. Visit NWEA.org to find out how NWEA can partner with you to help all kids learn.

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