

2021 Outstanding Educators in Special Education Awards

32 Teachers Recognized for Exceptional Service

(Photo/Text: Division of Education for Indigenous Peoples and Special Education)



In an effort to recognize the efforts and bolster the morale of educators working in the special education sector, the Ministry of Education organizes an Awards Ceremony for Outstanding Educators in Special Education every year. This year, the work of special educators has been even more of an uphill task due to the severity of the pandemic. Nonetheless, these dedicated teachers remained steadfast in their roles and did their best for every student under their care. The 2021 awards ceremony was held in the National Yilan Special School on September 24, 2021, in accordance with the Guidelines on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 stipulated by the Central Epidemic Command Center (CECC). During the ceremony, human traffic was strictly controlled and medical personnel was on standby in order to ensure the health and safety of everyone present.

The selection of Outstanding Educators in Special Education in 2021 was carried out in a stringent, objective, fair, impartial, and transparent manner. The first round of selection,

consisting of preliminary nominations and evaluations, was carried out by various education administration authorities. 79 outstanding teachers were shortlisted to be part of the final selection, which was carried out by a committee comprising experts and scholars engaged by the Ministry of Education. 32 educators were eventually selected to receive the award, of which 2 were from tertiary institutes, 5 from special schools, 5 from senior high schools, 18 from junior high schools, elementary schools, and kindergartens, and 2 from education administration agencies.

The theme of the awards ceremony goes, "Tireless effort in nurturing young minds, love and care for generations of students." Minister of Education Pan Wen-Chung's expressed his appreciation to every prize recipient for their dedication to special education, which enables every student with special needs to receive the care that they deserve. Besides being caring, patient, and adaptable, special educators also have to have a strong mastery of professional knowledge and skills in special education. Only then can they understand the needs of their students and meet those needs accordingly. In providing targeted help to the students, special educators not only help them to grow and learn but also facilitate their eventual integration into society.

Li Yu-Hsin, an educator from the Taipei Municipal School of Special Education who received the 2021 Outstanding Educator in Special Education Award (Special Schools Category), is himself visually impaired. He overcame the obstacles posed by his own low vision to develop teaching materials and teaching aids for visually impaired students. Being a dedicated teacher who spares no effort in helping students with special needs, Li Yu-Hsin has been advocating for a multi-sensory pedagogical approach and has organized relevant talks and experiential learning programs. Wu Hsuan-Feng, a teacher from the Miaoli Special Education School, has been a long-time advocate for improving the learning environment of special schools and has also been industriously sourcing for internship and employment opportunities for his students. In addition to making personal and regular visits to his students' workplaces to make sure that they

are learning and coping well, Wu Hsuan-Feng also arranges for the students' parents to be part of students' career track changes and to also visit their potential employers. All these measures, aimed at helping students integrate into the workplace seamlessly, have received support and affirmation from students, educators, and parents alike.

Cheng Chi-Ying, a teacher from the Taipei Minsheng Elementary School who received the 2021 Outstanding Educator in Special Education Award (Junior High Schools, Elementary Schools, and Kindergarten Category), is a strong proponent of the betterment of gifted education. In addition to guiding students in various competitions to expand their horizons, Cheng Chi-Ying also devotes her time to improving the gifted education program in elementary schools through research, such as by being a part of the diagnostic assessment committee, taking part in assessment design, and planning the Gifted Program. Huang Mei-Ling, from the Haiduan Junior High School in Taitung County, shines in her ability to adapt her teaching to the needs of students with special needs. Her in-depth understanding of the tribal culture in her school's vicinity has also enabled her to take the students' family circumstances into consideration when planning her teaching, so that she is able to offer students a wide range of activities to suit their needs and increase their exposure to new knowledge and skills.

The Ministry of Education appreciates the effort of each prize recipient in administering student-centric programs that put love and care, two features that define special education, at the forefront. These educators have also created friendly learning spaces that allow students with special needs to gain independence and develop their strengths. By their constant encouragement, support, and presence, the students have been gifted great opportunities to grow and mature as individuals. As Teachers' Day is right around the corner, we would like to wish every teacher a *Happy Teachers' Day!*