

Anna Suggs

Outstanding New Mexico Science Teacher
2015

New Mexico Academy of Science

Anna Suggs has been a sixth grade teacher for 21 years. For the last 15 years, she has been teaching sixth grade science at Zia Middle School in Las Cruces NM. She has a B.S. in agricultural animal science and an M.A. in curriculum and instruction, both from New Mexico State University.

During her tenure at Zia Middle School, she has been instrumental in implementing and participating in multiple afterschool science and technology programs, including the following: SEMAA (Science, Engineering Math and Aerospace Academy) through New Mexico State University; GUTS (Growing Up Thinking Scientifically) Computer Program; BEST (Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology) Robotics Teams; and the Technology Students Association. Her students at Zia also have worked in coordination with Spaceport America to build and launch small rockets carrying payloads.

Her desire to inspire young scientists has led to her (and her students') participation in the *NASA Remote Sensing Earth Science Teacher Program* in cooperation with Goddard Space Flight Center. Ms. Suggs and her students have been doing research at White Sands National Monument for 5 years. The research was to determine the impact of human activity on the dune field and the students worked with satellite data and a small UAV flown by the local model airplane club. This research has involved hundreds of students as well as teachers, university personnel, members of the model airplane club, and parents. She has also frequently taught other science teachers at summer institutes and science conferences.

In 2015, she received the *Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching*, one of only 102 mathematics and science teachers from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Department of Defense Education Activity to receive the award.

Ms. Suggs said the award is affirmation and inspiration to her, "The award affirms that the years of hard work, of constantly refining the art of teaching science, have been recognized," she said. "The inspiration is that, now that I have the award, I must continue work to empower my students and colleagues with a love of science and learning."