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## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Eric Hoppstock**  
**Superintendent**  
**Phone: (269) 471-7725 ext. 3342**

### **Berrien RESA Announces Parent Advisory Committee “Excellence in Education” award winner**

**Berrien Springs-** The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Excellence in Education Awards wrapped up yesterday with the announcement of this year’s runner-up and winner online via Facebook. The Berrien Regional Education Service Agency’s (Berrien RESA) Special Education Parent Advisory Committee named **Becky Rommel their 2022 award winner**. Rommel is an Occupational Therapist at Berrien RESA.

“Every child knows and loves Becky!” said one of Rommel’s nominators. “She can make any negative situation an opportunity for learning. Becky is essential to our survival, and she makes every day better for children and their parents.”

The runner-up was Judd Emery, a Speech Language Pathologist at Bridgman Public Schools.

“Judd walks with joy through life and makes every encounter with a child, staff, parent or community member be the most important priority of that moment,” said one of Emery’s nominators. “In the crazy busyness of any public school, this is truly a gift!”

Also recognized for their contributions to the special education community were:

- Kelly Hahaj, Teacher at Bridgman Elementary
- Mystique Pounders, Paraprofessional for Berrien RESA Offsite Classroom at Coloma Junior High School
- Deb Balbo, Teacher of Special Education at Coloma Elementary
- Mike Schmidt, Welding Teacher at Lakeshore High School
- Joan Kerber, Teacher in the ASD Program, Lighthouse Education Center
- Jennifer Gano, Teacher in the ASD Program, Berrien RESA Offsite Classroom at Coloma Elementary

Individuals were nominated from across school districts in Berrien County for their contributions to the education and success of students with impairments.

The Special Education Parents Advisory Committee (PAC) is comprised of two representatives from each school district in Berrien County. The committee works with Berrien RESA to discuss special education issues and creates an additional link between the Berrien RESA’s services and the local school districts.

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