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Media Advisory

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****PHOTO ATTACHED!****

Second EBRPSS Teacher Wins Wal-Mart Award

Baton Rouge, La. – A second teacher from East Baton Rouge Parish School System has been named Teacher of the Year by an area Wal-Mart store.

Alan Berthelot, a teacher at Sherwood Middle Academic Magnet School, was given the award by the O’Neal Lane Wal-Mart. The honor includes \$1,000 to use in the classroom. Recently, **Berthelot (*pictured, center*) accepted his award from O’Neal Lane Wal-Mart Manager James Grimbball (*left*) and Wal-Mart Personnel Director David Morris (*right*).**

Berthelot joins Michelle Kilcrease of Southeast Middle Magnet School. She also received a Teacher of the Year award recently (from the Wal-Mart on Coursey).

Teaching is a second career for Berthelot, who has been at Sherwood Middle Academic Magnet School for seven years (his entire teaching career). He worked at Winn Dixie for 29 years, but his job gradually became less about creativity and working with the public and more about structure and requirements. “I wanted something different,” Berthelot said. “I knew some people who were going into education, and I was excited about what they could do in the classroom. So I went back to school and got my teaching degree. I haven’t regretted the decision. It’s been wonderful. I really enjoy working with the kids.”

Berthelot teaches sixth-grade social studies and pre-law to sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Sherwood Middle is the only middle school and one of only two schools in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System that teaches a pre-law class. “They dress up as judges and attorneys for a mock trial. It’s fun, plus it involves listening skills and high-order thinking,” Berthelot said.

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SHERWOOD WAL-MART AWARD/2

Sherwood Middle Principal Phyllis Crawford said Berthelot deserves this award. “He is a fantastic teacher. He’s an exemplary teacher -- always giving in order to make the whole environment better,” Crawford said. “He never expects anything in return and wants to do things just because it makes it better. It doesn’t matter if it’s a student, colleague or school project. He just makes your day because of his positive attitude. It’s contagious.”

At the school, Berthelot is responsible for the Web site and podcast. He also is president of the LSU Writing Project, an organization that sponsors summer workshops for teachers to help them incorporate writing and literacy practices in their classroom instruction. Plus, Berthelot, along with Alesha Cavanaugh, serves as a co-director of the New Teacher Institute. It is a professional development program for new teachers with zero to three years experience in the classroom.

Wal-Mart’s Teacher of the Year program is one of the largest teacher recognition efforts in the country, giving about \$5 million annually to the schools of winning teachers. Since the Teacher of the Year program began in 1995, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. has honored just under 30,000 teachers nationwide and donated about \$19 million to local schools. **For more information, call Berthelot or Crawford at (225) 272-3090.**

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