



# Meet a Mentor

## Scott Hertting, PAEMST

Neenah High School  
Neenah, WI

On July 1, 2015, AAPT eMentor Scott Hertting was recognized by the White House with the Presidential Award for Excellent in Math and Science Teaching (PAEMST). This award sets Scott apart as one of only two recognized 6-12 math and science teachers in his home state of Wisconsin, among 108 recognized nationally this year. When asked what makes him a great physics teacher, he wasn't entirely sure he could identify it – he had to ask his former students. Unanimously, those he asked said that it was his investment of time in teaching his students, as well as the fact that he “didn’t give boring lectures.”

### Teaching physics with toys...

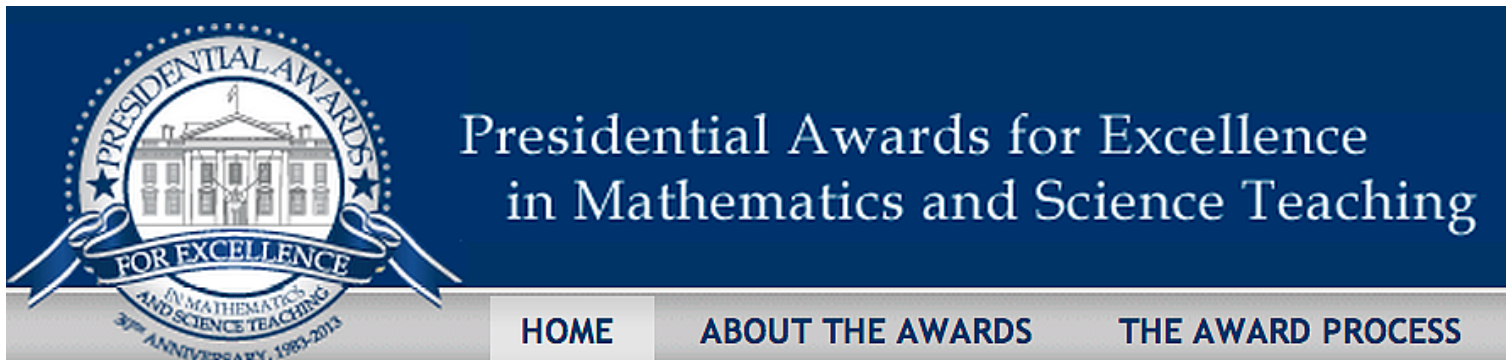


Scott said that he does his best to make physics relevant and fun, and regularly teaches with toys, including a set of kinematics challenges all involving Barbie right at the start of the school year. Check out Scott’s teaching blog for some innovative ideas: <https://shertting.wordpress.com/>

What’s more, Scott also has a long history of contributing to his colleagues as well. In 2001, Scott and a fellow teacher started the Phox Valley Physics and Physical Science Share Group. This physics teacher alliance meets five times a year with up to 20 local physics teachers who discuss instructional practice and professional growth. When a new physics teacher joins a nearby school district, he sends out personal invitations to attend the

share meetings. When asked about how he has been so successful at building up a professional learning community from scratch, Scott said, “It’s important to me that everyone – new and experienced – feel welcome at these meetings, and that there is no expectation to speak up unless the attendee wants to. Generally, we have the attitude ‘come when you can, leave when you have to.’” This approach has clearly landed Scott and his group with a lot of success as a professional learning network – the group has created a living wiki with lots of excellent resources <http://foxvalleyphysics.pbworks.com/>, and is active on Twitter @PhoxShare.

As for having received PAEMST, Scott is honored. While deciding whether or not to pursue PAEMST, he received lots of encouragement from his brother, who reminded him that applying for the award wasn’t just about the award, but about the professional development that would result from applying for it. The detailed application for PAEMST requires evidence of student growth and teacher planning and reflection on a video-taped lesson. According to Scott, “This process forces the teacher to be reflective. You have to ask yourself, ‘Why am I doing this? Is this good for kids? What evidence do I have that this is good for kids?’” Scott encourages other AAPT eMentors and eMentees to consider applying for PAEMST. Learn more about the award and the application process at <https://www.paemst.org/>.



**Do you have a story you would like to share? If you are a Mentor or Mentee, we would love to hear from you!**

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