

## Puentes Middle School nurse named Region 19 School Nurse of the Year



Ellen Brissette, school nurse at SSG Manuel R. Puentes Middle School in the Socorro Independent School District, was selected as a 2017 Region 19 School Nurse of the Year by the Texas School Nurses Organization for her excellent school nursing practice and leadership in school health.

Brissette's announcement was made at the TSNO end of the year meeting recently. As the Region 19 School Nurse of the Year, she will compete at the state level against 20 other school nurses and have the opportunity to attend the TSNO conference in November.

"Being named the Region 19 School Nurse of the year is a huge compliment," Brissette said. "There are so many awesome nurses in our district so it's a little surreal but a great surprise!"

Brissette has been a school nurse for 15 years and has more than 38 years of experience in the healthcare profession. She began her career in London, England and since then served as a hospital nurse in the intensive care unit, a surgical center, a private physician office, as the SISD district nurses manager, and as a school nurse at the middle and high school levels.

"Ms. Brissette's dedication and advocacy for students' health far reaches beyond her school responsibilities," said Luisa Herrera, TSNO-19 president. "She is actively involved in her community and sees projects through with unparalleled enthusiasm. She understands the importance of working as a team member and always sets a high standard for excellence."

She is also an active leader among her peers, said Rebecca Madrid, SISD nurse manager. She is a certified CPR instructor and an active member of her Campus Emergency Response Team ensuring that campus staff and students are trained and certified in first aid and CPR. She also represented the Lower Valley Health Fair Association as president and ensured in years past that the coordination and outcome of the health fair was a success.

"Ms. Brissette has been a dedicated school nurse for 16 years in SISD and truly deserves this award," Madrid said. "She does an outstanding job with her students, parents, faculty and the community. She goes above and beyond to advocate for the wellbeing of all who are entrusted in her professional and compassionate care."

Brissette was nominated for the award by 35 of her TSNO peers for her continuous drive to improve health and learning for her students, working with parents to access the care they need for their children, develop plans to ensure good continuum of care, as well as organize immunizations clinics for students, staff and the surrounding community.

"I love working with the kids," Brissette said. "I have a good day every day and there aren't many jobs where you can walk away feeling fulfilled and being with people you choose to be with."

The Region 19 Nurse of the Year said she enjoys spending time with her students and teaching them how to advocate for themselves and preparing them for high school and life.

"Education about the art of the nursing practice is key," Brissette said. "I believe that as you learn and share that knowledge you enhance the profession. My students are taught to be consumers of their health, to participate, to ask questions and understand the answers."