



NJDOE News

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State Board and DOE Recognize 2004 Principals of the Year

Today, the State Board of Education and the New Jersey Department of Education recognized three public school principals who were selected for honor in this year's New Jersey Principal of the Year Program. The three 2004 Principals of the Year honored were:

- Ms. Gail Cropper, Principal, Washington Elementary School, Trenton School District;
- Dr. Joseph Ramos, Ed.D., Principal, Dr. Michael Conti Elementary School #5, Jersey City School District; and
- Ms. Barbara Tedesco, Principal, Harrison Avenue Elementary School, Roselle School District.

"The State Board is proud to acknowledge these three principals that exemplify using new approaches to make school environments better for all of their students," said State Board President Arnold G. Hyndman. "We endorse their implemented ideas and support their creativity."

"We honor these three individuals today as the best examples of school-based leadership making a difference," said Commissioner Librera. "The department is committed to bringing best practices to local school management and in acknowledging those administrators who effectively implement innovation throughout the state of New Jersey."

"This year's three New Jersey Principals of the Year are outstanding school leaders who have proven their accomplishments by ensuring the quality of their school's educational programs and climates," added JoAnn D. Bartoletti, executive director of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association. "These recipients have been critical in developing innovative change and systemic reform in achieving improved student results in their schools. As executive director of New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, I congratulate the 2003-04 New Jersey Principals of the Year for their exceptional visionary leadership."

The three winners have implemented programs and systems that have creatively improved their school's administration and delivery of services.

Gail Cropper created a computerized data system to record the academic progress of each child in her school. The system also assists teachers to implement the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and helps to create individual action plans to help underachieving students master the standards. Cropper received her undergraduate and master's degrees as well as her administrative and supervisory certificates from Trenton State College. She has served as a teacher, guidance counselor, Youth Corps program advisor, teacher specialist for career development, director of a private nursery school, assistant principal and principal.

Joseph Ramos made his "good" school even better. To support his restructuring effort, Dr. Ramos met with school staff and developed initiatives and strategies for improvement which included the implementation of guided reading and looping in grades 1 & 2 and 3 & 4, the assignment of a math extension teacher to the fourth grade to support teachers and provide assistance to students, and the implementation of a Dual Language Program to comply with the World Language mandate and meet the needs of limited English proficient students. Dr. Ramos earned his bachelor's degree from Montclair State University. He went on to earn a master's degree from Teachers' College, Columbia University and received his certification as Principal and Supervisor from New Jersey City University. He earned a second master's degree and a doctorate from Teachers' College, Columbia University. He was the ESL teacher/coordinator at Dickinson High School and was an adjunct professor at New Jersey City University. He also worked as a supervisor of elementary education, language arts and bilingual/ESL in the central office before accepting the position as principal of Dr. Michael Conti School #5 in 1999.

Barbara Tedesco installed a telephone directory system for school parents that included access to homework, a monthly calendar of events and emergency school closing information. Tedesco offered rewards to students who have shown academic achievement and was instrumental in the institution of school uniforms to reduce conflicts

and keep students focused on learning. Tedesco is an active proponent of Family Math and Family Science and created a variety of Family Night programs to involve families in their children's educational experiences. She earned her bachelor's degree from Jersey City State College, master's degree from Fairleigh Dickinson University and principal's certificate from Kean University. She began her career as a teacher in 1973. She has been with the Roselle schools for over thirty years. She was a teacher of Spanish and ESL and was the department chair for bilingual/ESL, K-12 and World Language.

The New Jersey Principals of the Year Program is co-sponsored by the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association and the New Jersey Department of Education. The principals will each receive \$5,000 to be utilized in their schools from the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association through their affiliation with Washington Mutual and \$1000 for personal use. In return, the principals will share their expertise with others during activities planned by the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association.

For more information, please contact the Office of Innovative Programs and Schools at (609) 777-0800.