



NJDOE News

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State Board of Education Honors Recipients Of Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

The State Board of Education today recognized four teachers for their outstanding accomplishments and service to the classroom as part of the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching program.

The four teachers are:

Ellen LeBlanc, a 2003 Presidential Award winner in secondary math, who teaches at High Technology High School, Monmouth County Vocational-Technical Schools;

Marilyn Steneken, a 2003 Presidential Award winner in secondary science, who teaches at Sparta Township Middle School, Sparta Township Schools, Sussex County;

Michele Mandara, a 2004 finalist in elementary mathematics, who teaches at the Holland Brook School, Readington Township Public Schools, Hunterdon County; and

Ashley Rothbard-Berk, a 2004 finalist in elementary mathematics, who teaches at the Travell Elementary School, Ridgewood Public Schools, Bergen County.

"These talented professionals are models of excellence in their subject areas," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera, who introduced the four recipients to the State board. "They have demonstrated a lifelong commitment to teaching and inspiring their students to learn and succeed, while at the same time winning the respect of their colleagues."

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is the nation's highest honor for teachers of mathematics and science. It recognizes grades K-6 and 7-12 in alternate years. Each national award consists of a \$10,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to the recipient, to be spent at the teacher's direction. The award also includes expense-paid activities in Washington, D.C., where the award winners receive certificates signed by the President.

Teachers are selected for the program based on their teaching performance, background and experience, and their participation in activities both in and out of school that relate to their roles as teachers. Applicants must demonstrate how their teaching enables students to better learn concepts in mathematics and science.

Statewide panels of science and mathematics educators review classroom videos and professional development activities in selecting the state finalists. National panels later select presidential awardees from among the state finalists.

The National Science Foundation began the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching program in 1983 by inviting each state to nominate teachers in two fields for consideration. Teachers must have taught science or mathematics for at least five years. Nominations can be made by students, parents, administrators, teachers and others.

The program is administered in New Jersey by the DOE's Office of Innovative Programs and Schools.