

Christie Administration Announces New Jersey's County Teachers of the Year for 2015-16

For Immediate Release

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Trenton, NJ – The Christie Administration today announced the selection of New Jersey's 21 County Teachers of the Year for the 2015-2016 school year.

Through the recognition program, the New Jersey Department of Education honors some of the state's most dynamic educators. The County Teachers of the Year are recognized for their valuable contributions to their school communities at the local level, and are given the opportunity to serve as ambassadors of education to officials at the state level.

The County Teachers of the Year were recently honored at an orientation ceremony at the Department of Education in Trenton. The Department of Education celebrated the achievements of the teachers as they interacted with each other in a variety of sessions and took part in a panel discussion about educational initiatives.

"I'm pleased to congratulate all of our County Teachers of the Year for 2015-16," said Education Commissioner David C. Hespe. "I consider this award a tribute to the talent, dedication, professionalism and success of these educators. They not only inspire the children they teach, they inspire us all.

"New Jersey public schools are widely considered to be among the strongest in the nation," Hespe added, "and teachers like these are part of the reason why. I am proud to recognize their leadership and look forward to learning more from them in the year to come."

The Department of Education will engage this group of honored educators throughout the 2015-16 school year in a number of ways. In addition to fostering opportunities for the teachers to network with educators throughout the state and country, state officials will count on the group to bring valuable resources and materials directly from the Department to local districts. At the same time, the teachers will be invited to serve on state committees and task forces to share their own experiences and voices at the state level.

County Teachers of the Year are first selected at the school level through the Governor's Educator of the Year program. They then go on to compete at the county level and are selected by panels representing a cross-section of administrators, teachers, parents, and county education association representatives convened by the Department's executive county superintendents.

A state-level panel of educators will select New Jersey's State Teacher of the Year based on a written application, video submission, and interviews with the top five finalists. The State Teacher of the Year will be announced at the State Board of Education's October meeting, and will go on to represent New Jersey at the National Teacher of the Year competition.

The National Teacher of the Year Program, of which the County Teacher of the Year program is a part, began in 1952 and continues as the oldest, most prestigious national honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. The program is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The CCSSO will name the nation's top teacher in April 2016.

The Department encourages every school district to take advantage of the Governor's Educator of the Year program as one way to recognize the hard work and dedication of their outstanding teachers. Additional information can be found on the Governor's [Educator of the Year webpage](#).

New Jersey's 2015-2016 County Teachers of the Year are as follows:

County	First Name	Grade taught	Subject Area	School	School District
Atlantic	Michael Martirone	9	Social Studies	Egg Harbor Township High School	Egg Harbor Township School District
	Gregory			Formerly from Roy W. Brown	

Bergen	Mulford	6-8	Music	Middle School	Bergenfield School District
Burlington	Jennifer Braverman	7-12	Art	Maple Shade High School	Maple Shade School District
Camden	Elizabeth Light	8-12	Art	Gloucester City Junior-Senior High School	Gloucester City School District
Cape May	Erin Ridgway	2	Elementary	Glenwood Avenue Elementary School	Wildwood School District
Cumberland	Belinda Murphy	7-8	Mathematics	ExCEL School	Bridgeton School District
Essex	Jessica Picciuto	4	Elementary	Oak View School	Bloomfield School District
Gloucester	Jennifer Clune	K-2	Special Education	Jeffrey Clark School	East Greenwich Township School District
Hudson	Danielle Savino-Garzon	2	Elementary	Dr. Michael Conti School	Jersey City School District
Hunterdon	Samantha Billig	9-12	Business Education	Hunterdon Central Regional High School	Hunterdon Central Regional High School District
Mercer	Edward Holub	8	Social Studies	Pond Road Middle School	Robbinsville Township Public School District
Middlesex	Janet El-Maraghy	4	Elementary	Dr. H.N. Richardson 21st Century School	Perth Amboy School District
Monmouth	Amanda Andrews	7	Mathematics	Keyport Central School	Keyport Public School District
Morris	Cheryl Zanone	7	Science	Robert R. Lazar Middle School	Montville School District
Ocean	Brittany Bucco	6-8	World Languages	Lake Riviera Middle School	Brick Township School District
Passaic	Shawn Rhinesmith	2	Elementary	Marshall Hill Elementary School	West Milford Township School District
Salem	Chelsea Collins	6	English	Woodstown Middle School	Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District
Somerset	Kristine Shurina	8	English	Bridgewater Raritan Middle School	Bridgewater Raritan School District
Sussex	Lisa Hirkaler Murphy	9-12	Art	Vernon Township High School	Vernon Township School District
Union	Janice Marsili	7-12	Art	David Brearley Middle/High School	Kenilworth School District
Warren	Darlene Noel	3	Elementary	Green Street School	Phillipsburg School District