



For Immediate Release
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**New Jersey Department of Education Announces
County Teachers of the Year for 2026-2027**

Ewing, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) today announced the 21 educators who have been named New Jersey’s County Teachers of the Year for the 2026-2027 school year. The educators were recognized at an awards ceremony today at The College of New Jersey in Ewing.

“New Jersey’s success depends on the strength of our public schools and the tireless commitment of the educators who show up every day for our kids,” **said Governor Mikie Sherrill.** “The 21 County Teachers of the Year who are being recognized today represent the very best of this profession. Their commitment to helping students learn, grow, and achieve their goals strengthens communities across our state and helps ensure a brighter future for New Jersey.”

“The County Teachers of the Year exemplify the excellence, creativity, and dedication that define the teaching profession in New Jersey,” **said Dr. Lily Laux, Commissioner of Education.** “School can change the trajectory of a child’s life – and great teachers are the heart of that change, providing students with meaningful learning opportunities that make them feel safe, supported, and successful. We are proud to celebrate these educators and the positive influence they have on countless students and families.”

Individual schools select Teachers of the Year, who are eligible to apply for County Teacher of the Year through the Governor’s Educator of the Year Program, an initiative that recognizes outstanding teachers and educational services professionals. More information is available on the [Governor’s Educator of the Year Program](#) webpage.

The County Teachers of the Year will network with colleagues throughout the state and serve as ambassadors for New Jersey’s public schools during the school year.

A panel of educators will select the New Jersey State Teacher of the Year from among the 21 County Teachers of the Year based on written applications, video submissions, and interviews with the top finalists. The announcement of the New Jersey State Teacher of the Year is scheduled to take place this fall. The New Jersey State Teacher of the Year will go on to represent New Jersey in competing for the title of National Teacher of the Year.

New Jersey's 2026-2027 County Teachers of the Year

County	Teacher	Position	School	School District
Atlantic	Kimberley Briles	Social Studies Teacher	Cedar Creek High School	Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District
Bergen	Thomas Villa	Science Teacher	Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan	Northern Valley Regional High School District
Burlington	Joseph Latigona	Criminal Justice Teacher	Medford Campus	Burlington County Institute of Technology
Camden	Ana Sánchez Hernández	Spanish Teacher	Haddonfield Middle School	Haddonfield School District

County	Teacher	Position	School	School District
Cape May	Carly Crisanti	Art Teacher	Lower Cape May Regional High School	Lower Cape May Regional School District
Cumberland	Jeffrey Martine *	Gifted & Talented Teacher	Anthony Rossi Elementary School	Vineland School District
Essex	Carla Ferreira	English Language Arts Teacher	Newark School of Architecture & Interior Design	Newark School District
Gloucester	Pamela DeRose	Art Teacher	Delsea Regional High School	Delsea Regional School District
Hudson	Shelly Witham	Earth and Environmental Science Teacher	High Tech High School	Hudson County Schools of Technology
Hunterdon	Gretchen Biedermann	Special Education Teacher	J.P. Case Middle School	Flemington-Raritan School District
Mercer	Jennifer Vogel	STEM Teacher	Melvin H. Kreps Middle School	East Windsor Regional School District
Middlesex	Jessica Miele	3rd Grade Teacher	James Monroe Elementary School	Edison Township School District
Monmouth	Megan Watts	Mathematics Teacher	Manalapan-Englishtown Middle School	Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District
Morris	Hannah Olmo	Dance Teacher	Dover High School	Dover School District
Ocean	Angela Germano	English Language Arts Teacher	Toms River Intermediate East	Toms River Regional School District
Passaic	Gemmerton Reyes	TV Video Production Teacher	Manchester Regional High School	Manchester Regional High School District
Salem	Michelle Schnetzler	Special Education Teacher	Paul W. Carleton Elementary School	Penns Grove - Carneys Point Regional School District
Somerset	Neil Thompson	Social Studies Teacher	North Plainfield High School	North Plainfield School District
Sussex	James McKowen	Computer Science Teacher	Hopatcong High School	Hopatcong Borough School District
Union	Alice Debowski	Special Education Teacher	J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy	Elizabeth School District
Warren	Melissa Arrambide	2nd Grade Teacher	Mountain Villa School	Allamuchy Township School District

* The news release lists this teacher’s school at the time of nomination. He currently teaches at Vineland High School.