



NJDOE News

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For Release: July 28, 2004

Elementary School Teachers Named Finalists for Presidential Awards

Two New Jersey elementary school teachers have been named finalists in a national program designed to recognize exemplary teaching in mathematics and science. Both participated in the 2004 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

The two teachers were named finalists in grades K-6 mathematics. They are: Michele Mandara, Holland Brook School, Readington Township School District; and Ashley Rothbard, Travell Elementary School, Ridgewood School District.

"These two talented educators represent the very best of our teachers who each day teach and inspire our students to learn about mathematics," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "We commend them for attaining this prestigious distinction."

Michele Mandara has taught third grade at Holland Brook School for three years. She began her career 10 years ago in the Paramus School District and has also taught in the Alpine and Upper Saddle River school systems. She earned her bachelor's degree in education from Felician College.

Mandara has facilitated workshops on new district math assessments for her school and district. She has designed and implemented her school's 2004 math goal, and has served as math mentor for Holland Brook School teachers.

Ashley Rothbard has taught fifth grade at Travell Elementary School for two years. She entered the teaching profession five years ago in the Port Washington, New York school system. She holds a bachelor's degree in child development from Tufts University and her masters in education from Bank Street College.

Rothbard has served her school and district, in part, by co-writing the math enrichment curriculum, creating a math and literature unit connected to national mathematics standards, and participating as a staff developer for fellow teachers. She was named her school's teacher of the year for 2003-04.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is the nation's highest honor for teachers of mathematics and science in grades K-12. The National Science Foundation began the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching in 1983 by inviting each state to nominate math and science teachers for consideration in the national program. In alternate years, the program honors teachers in grades K-6 and 7-12. Teachers must have taught science or mathematics for at least five years to be eligible for consideration.

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 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is one of many education initiatives supported by Gov. James E. McGreevey and the Department of Education. Enhancing teacher quality and celebrating examples of best practices are priority goals of the Department of Education and are major components of the Governor's 21-point plan for education.

For more information about Gov. McGreevey's plan to improve education or for more information about education matters, visit the Department of Education's Web-site:

www.state.nj.us/education

For more information about the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, contact the Public Information Office at 609-292-1126.

