



## NJDOE News

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### **Ridgewood Teacher Receives Presidential Award for Mathematics Teaching**

Ashley Berk, a fifth-grade teacher in Bergen County, received a Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching this week in Washington, D.C.

Berk, who teaches at Travell Elementary School in Ridgewood, is one of 95 elementary and middle school teachers being honored in the nation's capital.

"Ashley's commitment to education is clear every day she enters a classroom," Commissioner of Education William L. Librera said. "That commitment is reinforced by this award, and we are certain she will continue to give the best opportunities to each one of her students."

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 discretion.

In the Ridgewood School District, Berk has co-authored the math enrichment curriculum, created a math and literature unit connected to national mathematics standards, and served as a staff developer for fellow teachers, among other things.

She was named her school's Teacher of the Year for 2003-2004.

Teachers are selected for the Presidential Awards 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.

The New Jersey DOE selected two state finalists and sent their applications for national consideration. The two state finalists this year were Berk and Michele Mandara, a mathematics teacher at Holland Brook School in Readington Township.

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.

For more information about DOE teacher recognition efforts, please click here:

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/news/2004/1216top.htm>. For more information about the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, please click here: [www.paemst.org](http://www.paemst.org).

For additional information, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.