

NJDOE News

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State Board of Education Honors Principals of the Year

The State Board of Education today honored four school principals as recipients of Principal of the Year—Rewarding Visionary Leadership Awards for 2005. Recognized were:

Dr. Lynn J. Caravello, principal of Bernards High School, Somerset Hills;
Dr. Paul J. Christopher, principal of the Marine Academy of Science and Technology, Sandy Hook;
Robert F. Patten, principal of the Matthew Jago Elementary School, Woodbridge; and
Patricia Wright, principal of the Robert Frost Elementary School, East Brunswick

“The principal, as the school’s educational leader, is key to the success of the school,” said Acting Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. “Educational excellence occurs when the school principal establishes high expectations for student learning and teacher performance and is willing to take risks and responsibility to accomplish these ends.”

Ernest Lepore, member of the State Board of Education, echoed Davy’s remarks and added this praise: “Each of you has distinguished yourself in a variety of ways, bringing your own special talents and abilities to your students and staff. “You have displayed the type of leadership qualities that have contributed greatly to your school’s learning environment and the ability of your teaching staff to be as effective as possible.”

The four winners have implemented programs and systems that have creatively improved their schools’ administration and delivery of services.

Dr. Lynn J. Caravello implemented a model at Bernards High School for inclusionary education for severely disabled students. She also implemented a strategic plan for her school based on the Cambridge model. This plan involves participation by different segments of the education community and has resulted in the development of four student objectives in the areas of: writing, math/science, technology and service learning. Dr. Caravallo established an International Baccalaureate program at the school and has developed many partnerships between the school and members of the business community.

Dr. Caravallo holds bachelors degree in psychology from the State University of New York, her master’s degree in special education from Rutgers University, and her Ed.S, also from Rutgers.

Dr. Paul Christopher has taken parent and community involvement to new heights at the Marine Academy of Science and Technology, assuring parents that they are not only welcome at the school, but also that their participation is essential to a sense of community. He has developed active and strong relationships with many organizations, including the Monmouth County Water Resources Association, Aqua Survey Corporation of Flemington, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Clean Ocean Action, U.S. Coast Guard, and the New Jersey Audubon Society.

Dr. Christopher earned his bachelor’s degree in science from the University of Scranton. He holds a masters degree in science education from Monmouth University and his doctorate in education from Nova Southeastern University.

Patricia Wright emphasizes a “community of learners” theme at Robert Frost Elementary School that permeates the school culture of teachers, students, parents and the community. She has created a variety of programs to support this emphasis, including an award winning character education program, “Reaching Out in Harmony,” which addresses bullying and related issues. She also implemented an in-house professional development program. Parents are valued and encouraged to participate in school activities throughout the year.

Her leadership has resulted in the establishment this fall of a Parent University, which features workshops on how to reinforce the goals of the school at home. Through the use of focus groups and shared feedback, teachers and staff have improved reading strategies and created support for Web-sites for all district teachers.

Wright earned her bachelor's degree from Rowan University, her masters degree from Kean University and her Ed.M from Rutgers University.

The New Jersey Principals of the Year Program is co-sponsored by the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association and the New Jersey Department of Education. The principals will each receive \$5,000 courtesy of Washington Mutual for education initiatives to benefit their school districts. In addition, each recipient will receive a \$1,000 personal award courtesy of NJPSA. In return, the principals will share their expertise with others during activities planned by the New Jersey principals and Supervisors Association.