



NJDOE News

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Department of Education Honors 15 Distinguished Teacher Candidates

State Board of Education member Debra Casha and senior staff from the New Jersey Department of Education today recognized 15 prospective teachers as Commissioner's Distinguished Teacher Candidates for 2007.

The candidates were recognized during a ceremony held in their honor this morning at the Department of Education's Judge Robert L. Carter Building in Trenton. Today's ceremony culminates the 22nd year of the program.

"This award program has special prestige because it is designed to result in the nomination of the very best teacher candidates our state has to offer," said Assistant Commissioner of Education Jay Doolan. "It also shines a light on the high quality teacher preparation programs offered in New Jersey."

The presidents of all New Jersey colleges and universities with teacher preparation programs each nominate up to three candidates for consideration. A total of 50 candidates from 19 college programs were considered for the 2007 awards. Since the program's inception, more than 300 teacher candidates have received Distinguished Teacher Candidate Awards.

Each teacher selected for recognition receives a framed certificate, plus a reference letter from Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy.

The 15 graduates recognized today are:

- Karen Cerasiello, Clifton, Caldwell College, elementary education;
- Katherine Clements, South Orange, Seton Hall University, elementary education;
- Edwin Gonzalez, Orlando, Florida, Rutgers University - Camden, Spanish;
- Melanie Gross, Margate, Stockton College, elementary education;
- Crystal Jahn, Toms River, Rowan University, health and physical education;
- Tara James, Belleville, Montclair State University, elementary education;
- Jenna Marie Lerro, Ringwood, The College of New Jersey, English;
- Marie Magas-Sniffen, Cherry Hill, Felician College, elementary education;
- Jeanine Motta, Cherry Hill, Rutgers University-Camden, Spanish;
- Janet Parziale, Gillette, Kean University, mathematics;
- Ashley Perrini, Lyndhurst, Felician College, elementary education;
- Tania Rodriguez, Linden, Montclair State University, Spanish;
- Caleb Stabler, Montchanin, Delaware, Princeton University, social studies;
- Anna Tomaszewski, Newton, Centenary College, elementary education; and
- Jillian Widdows, Cranford, College of Saint Elizabeth, elementary education.

Assistant Commissioner Doolan thanked the educators who served on the selection program for this year's awards. They are: James Bathurst, superintendent of schools, Collingswood Public Schools; Ronald Burd, a teacher from Woodglen School in Lebanon Township, Hunterdon County; Dr. Chris Campisano, coordinator of higher education for the New Jersey Department of Education; Robert Copeland, superintendent of schools, Piscataway Public Schools; George Corwell, associate director of education, New Jersey Catholic Conference; Charles Earling, principal of Collingswood High School; Patricia Hutchinson, principal of Lumberton Middle School; and Wendell Steinhauer, secretary-treasurer, New Jersey Education Association.