



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:

**Kathryn Forsyth, Director
609-292-1126**

For Release: October 23, 2007

Four New Jersey High School Teachers Are Presidential Award Finalists

Three New Jersey math teachers and one New Jersey science teacher have been selected as finalists for the 2007 Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching, the nation's highest honor for math and science educators, Education Commissioner Lucille E. Davy announced today.

The New Jersey finalists are:

- Karen Galley, of Lawrenceville, a chemistry teacher at West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South.
- Margaret Dever, of Old Bridge, a math teacher at Marlboro High School.
- Grace Smith, of Marlton, a math teacher at Beck Middle School in Cherry Hill.
- Thomas Santulli, of Waldwick, a math teacher at Ramsey High School.

The PAEMST awards are sponsored by the National Science Foundation. Each state establishes panels of science and mathematics teachers every year to nominate its PAEMST finalists. The finalists are selected from among nominated teachers, who submit testimonials, videotapes of their lesson presentations and other material. National panels will select Presidential Award winners from among the state finalists next spring.

"These four outstanding teachers will do an excellent job in representing New Jersey in this most prestigious national competition," said Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. "Their in-depth understanding of their subjects coupled with their passion for teaching inspires both their students and their co-workers."

Karen Galley has taught at West Windsor-Plainsboro South since 1989. She is a graduate of Southern Connecticut State University and holds a master's degree in polymer physical chemistry from Syracuse University. She received National Board Certification last year, is a former president of the New Jersey Science Teachers Association, and was honored as the 2006 Outstanding High School Chemistry Teacher by the Mid-Atlantic Region of the American Chemistry Society.

The topic of her lesson was electrochemistry. Students were led to discover that sometimes it takes less energy to electrolyze water than to electrolyze the ionic compound dissolved in the water. They conducted a series of electrolysis reactions in which observations led them to identify the appropriate products of the reactions.

"Karen is not only a positive force in her classroom, demonstrating excellent teaching techniques and a genuine concern for student success, but (she also) has a desire to help her fellow teachers provide an outstanding educational opportunity for all students," said Charles D. Rudnick, the principal of West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South.

Margaret Dever has worked at Marlboro High School for 36 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the College of St. Elizabeth and a master's degree in mathematics from Rutgers University. She is a former New Jersey Governor's Teacher Recognition Program award recipient at Marlboro High School, the president of the Shore Math League and the advisor to the high school's math team.

The student assignment in her lesson was to find the volumes of solids with known cross-sections. Since the volume of any solid can be approximated by finding the volume of smaller components of that solid, students learned to recognize the shape of these component pieces and apply the concept of the Riemann sum estimate of the total volume. The visual model Mrs. Deaver used in the lesson was molded out of Rice Krispie treats.

"Throughout my many years in education, I have never met an educator so dedicated to her family and profession," said James Mullevey, the former principal of Marlboro High School, who nominated Mrs. Dever for the award. "Regardless of the level, from AP Calculus to College Entrance Mathematics, Mrs. Dever guides all of her students to a deeper understanding of mathematics."

Grace Smith began teaching mathematics at Beck Middle School in 1995. She holds a bachelor's degree in education from D'Youville College in Buffalo, New York, and a master's degree in education from Canisius College, also in Buffalo. She is a new teacher mentor, served on numerous Cherry Hill mathematics curriculum committees and has been honored in Who's Who Among America's Teachers.

Her lesson focused on the creation and interpretation of scatter plots, the investigation of linear equations and slope. The students

used graphing calculators and CBL motion detectors to model and interpret graphs and describe how changes in one quantity or variable result in changes in another. She developed an activity called *Match It, Graph It* to help students learn to work together to discover the relationship between distance and time.

"I am very happy and proud to be included in the potential honoring of one of the best educators that I have had the pleasure with which to work," said Beck Middle School principal Dr. Dennis S. Perry. "Mrs. Smith is a mentor to all of our math teachers and supports their efforts to utilize best practices in the classroom. She has developed a number of math labs that are utilized throughout the school district. She arrives early each day and stays late into the evening to assist students."

Thomas Santulli has taught mathematics in the Ramsey school district since 1983. He worked at Ramsey High School from 1983 until 1992 and from 2003 to the present. From 1992 until 2003, he taught at Eric Smith Middle School. He holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's degree in mathematics education, both from Montclair State University. He has also taught mathematics education as an adjunct instructor at the College of St. Elizabeth and William Paterson University.

The topic of his lesson was the role of representation in several problems involving optimization. *The Box Project*, which he created for the lesson, gives groups of students working together the opportunity to explore representations at a higher level, learning through an engaging, hands-on approach, and then utilizing graphing calculators to maximize the volume of the box.

"Composing this letter has made me appreciate the talent, energy and expertise that Tom Santulli has," wrote Dr. Thomas J. Mellville, the former principal of Ramsey High School, who nominated Mr. Santulli for the award. "Mr. Santulli's knowledge of current teaching practices like differentiated instruction, teaching to multiple intelligences, higher level thinking, alternative assessment and cooperative learning has allowed us to employ him as a mentor to novice teachers. He is a resource person for others."

The PAEMST program was established in 1983. In alternate years, the program honors teachers in grades K-6 and grades 7-12. Candidates must have taught science or mathematics for at least five years.

Anyone can submit a nomination for an educator whom they feel is deserving of this award. Nomination forms for the 2008 selection process honoring elementary school teachers grades K-6 will soon be available online at <http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=DRL>.