



Middlesex County Fourth-Grade Teacher Named New Jersey 2012-2013 Teacher of the Year

Lauren Marrocco Selected From Among 21 County and State Facility Teachers of the Year

For Immediate Release

Contact: Barbara Morgan
Rich Vespucci
609-292-1126

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Trenton, NJ – The Christie Administration today selected Lauren Marrocco, a fourth-grade teacher in Perth Amboy’s Edward J. Patten Elementary School in Middlesex County, as the New Jersey 2012-2013 Teacher of the Year. Commissioner of Education Chris Cerf and the State Board of Education honored Marrocco at a ceremony in Trenton. Marrocco resides in East Windsor and earned her bachelor’s degree in elementary education and her master’s degree in educational administration and supervision from Kean University.



Pictured from left to right are: Perth Amboy AFT President , Donna Chiera; Retired Principal, Joyce DeFeo; Perth Amboy Board of Education Member, Obdulia Gonzalez; Perth Amboy Acting Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Vivian Rodriguez; NJ State Teacher of the Year, Lauren Marracco; State Board President, Arcelio Aponte; Middlesex County Interim Executive Superintendent, Dr. Samuel Stewart; Edward J. Patten Principal, Dr. Dulce Rodriguez; Vice Principal, Althea Rogers-Baker; and Commissioner Chris Cerf

“Hands down, New Jersey’s most important and valuable resource for our students is our teachers,” said Governor Christie. “Across our state, effective teachers are doing excellent work in our schools, engaging children in subject matter and drawing out of them the critical thinking skills and the passion for knowledge to make learning a lifelong endeavor. Lauren Marrocco exemplifies the very best of her profession and all that excellent teaching can accomplish in our state – helping our children progress into accomplished, knowledgeable, and successful young adults ready to step into the workforce or college classroom. I congratulate her on this great honor.”

Marrocco has taught at E.J. Patten, a K-4, 890-student school, for the entirety of her 10-year teaching career, first teaching first grade and then switching to fourth grade in 2010. Almost from the beginning, she has been involved in a variety of school- and district-wide teams designed to increase teachers’ knowledge and skills through professional development workshops, to improve parent and school relations, and to mentor new teachers.

“Effective, passionate teachers are the essential agents to any reform agenda we embark upon for our schools,” said Commissioner Cerf. “Lauren Marrocco represents the type of spirit and drive that inspire her students to realize their full potential. In addition, she extends her love of teaching to encourage her colleagues and future teachers to model best practices. She is a fine representative of the many exemplary teachers we have in New Jersey.”

“Lauren Marrocco clearly exemplifies the talent, dedication and innovation that are the hallmarks of New Jersey’s finest educators,” said Arcelio Aponte, President of the State Board of Education. “Ms. Marrocco’s mentoring of other teachers, engaging parents and the Perth Amboy community in school activities and raising student achievement levels is a clear indicator that placing high-quality teachers in urban classrooms is essential for improving student performance and life-long outcomes.”

“I consider my day-to-day interactions with my students to be the greatest accomplishment in my career,” Marrocco said. “Every day allows me to build rapport with each of my students, leading to positive, productive and trustworthy relationships.”

With a commitment toward continued professional development and growth, Marrocco successfully earned her National Board Certification in Literacy: Reading-Language Arts, Early-Middle Childhood, from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Achieving National Board Certification involves a long and detailed process of documenting knowledge and practice in the profession, and is the one of the highest academic distinctions a classroom teacher can earn.

“I feel honored and humbled to know that my contributions have been noticed and appreciated,” Marrocco says. “This further motivates me to continue in the role of student as well as educator, as my learning will never be complete.”

As she gained experience and continued to have success in the classroom, Marrocco began to share her skills and knowledge by conducting workshops for her colleagues in a variety of areas, by working with student teachers, and by mentoring newly hired teachers. She expanded her interest in student performance last year when she accepted the coordinator position of the summer school program at E.J. Patten. Her first year was successful, with high enrollment and gains in student growth recorded over the four-week program. Recognizing the positive impact parental engagement has on children’s learning, Marrocco has also worked in community programs that seek to increase the participation, communication, and collaboration between parents, schools, and communities.

Seeking to learn new and innovative teaching methods and practices to bring into her classroom, Marrocco was selected by Quantum Learning Network in January as a SuperCamp facilitator. In July, she received two weeks of intense training on effective teaching and facilitation strategies. These strategies are founded in brain-based research and provided Lauren with even more techniques that maximize student engagement and learning. She has incorporated Quantum Learning’s “8 Keys of Success” character building approach with her students. She advocates Quantum Learning’s belief that strong character leads to higher levels of academic achievement, and empowers her students to help set classroom rules and codes of conduct that contain expectations that everyone treats each other with respect and that everyone is accountable for his or her behavior.

Dr. Dulce Rodriguez, the principal of E.J. Patten, describes Marrocco as “an enthusiastic educator who researches and tries new ideas and strategies to help improve her own instruction in order to help her students achieve the high academic performance that she expects from them and from herself.”

The New Jersey Teacher of the Year award is selected and administered by the Department of Education. This year’s New Jersey Teacher of the Year program is sponsored by three organizations and companies that provide valuable resources for the recipient teacher.

Educational Testing Service will sponsor a six-month sabbatical from January to June 2013. During this time, Marrocco will work closely with the Department of Education on special projects. In addition, in her role as State Teacher of the Year, she will give presentations around the state and participate in national activities, including meeting the President of the United States.

The New Jersey Education Association will pay for a rental car and travel expenses for Marrocco for a full year, while SMART Technologies will provide a SMART Board package.

New Jersey’s Teacher of the Year program allows many talented teachers to be recognized. The process begins at the local level, where school and district-level teachers of the year are chosen. District Teachers of the Year have their applications submitted for competition at the county level.

The county teachers of the year were announced by the Department last month:
<http://nj.gov/education/news/2012/0913toy.htm>

Additional information on the State Teacher of the Year program can be found on the NJDOE’s website here:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/educators/rpr/recognition/educators/geoy/>