

## Christie Administration Announces New Jersey's County Teachers of the Year for 2016-17

**For Immediate Release**

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**Trenton, NJ** – The Christie Administration today announced the selection of New Jersey's 21 County Teachers of the Year for the 2016-17 school year.

"I congratulate all of our County Teachers of the Year for 2016-17 for their tremendous contribution to their schools," said Education Commissioner David C. Hespe. "We honor the commitment, talent, and success of these teachers with this award. With great teachers like them, it is no wonder that New Jersey has a world-class education system."

The Department of Education will have the honor of engaging with this group of outstanding teachers throughout the 2016-17 school year. In addition to developing opportunities for the teachers to network with educators throughout the state and country, the Department will encourage the group to bring valuable resources and current information to the local districts. The teachers also will be able to serve on state committees and task forces to share their own experiences and viewpoints.

"County Teachers of the Year represent the innovative and exemplary practices that are going on in classrooms throughout our state," said Chelsea Collins, a sixth-grade language arts teacher from Salem County and the 2015-16 State Teacher of the Year. "This program not only recognizes educators for the exemplary work they are doing each day, but it also creates opportunities for them to come together as advocates for the profession and to ultimately impact student learning in profound ways."

County Teachers of the Year are first selected at the school level through the Governor's Educator of the Year program. They then go on to compete at the county level and are selected by panels representing a cross-section of administrators, teachers, parents, and county education association representatives convened by the Department's executive county superintendents.

A state-level panel of educators will select New Jersey's State Teacher of the Year based on a written application, video submission, and interviews with the top five finalists. The State Teacher of the Year will be announced at the State Board of Education's October meeting and will go on to represent New Jersey at the National Teacher of the Year competition.

The National Teacher of the Year Program, of which the County Teacher of the Year program is a part, began in 1952 and continues as the oldest, most prestigious national honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. The program is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The CCSSO will name the nation's top teacher in May 2017.

The Department encourages all school district to take advantage of the Governor's Educator of the Year program as one way to recognize the hard work and dedication of their excellent teachers. Additional information can be found on the Governor's [Educator of the Year webpage](#).

New Jersey's 2016-17 County Teachers of the Year are as follows:

2016-17 County Teachers of the Year					
County	Name	Grade Taught	Subject Area	School	School District
Atlantic	Gary Jerue	7th	Mathematics	Richmond Avenue School	Atlantic City School District

Bergen	Argine Safari	9th-12th	Music	Pascack Valley High School	Pascack Valley Regional High School District
Burlington	Karen Dugan	7th	Social Studies	Burlington City High School	Burlington City School District
Camden	Julie Wright	1st	Elementary	Gloucester Township Elementary School	Gloucester Township School District
Cape May	Mary Elizabeth Libro	3rd	Elementary	Ocean City Primary School	Ocean City School District
Cumberland	Terry Kuhnreich	11th-12th	Social Studies	Vineland High School	Vineland Public School District
Essex	Harvey Craig	9th-12th	ROTC	Irvington High School	Irvington School District
Gloucester	Jennifer Schoepflin	5th	Elementary	Simmons Elementary School	Clayton School District
Hudson	Alexander Kuziola	9th	Biology	Bayonne High School	Bayonne School District
Hunterdon	Suzanne Vrancken	9th-12th	Special Education	Hunterdon Central Regional High School	Hunterdon Central Region High School District
Mercer	William Leonardo	5th	Elementary	Sayen Elementary School	Hamilton Township School District
Middlesex	Sara Dea	8th	English	Highland Park Middle School	Highland Park School District
Monmouth	Sondra Lougee	1st-2nd	Special Education	Raritan Valley Elementary School	Hazlet Township School District
Morris	Scott Malagold	9th-12th	Social Studies	Morris County School of Technology	Morris County Vocational School District
Ocean	Jeanette Wehner	5th	Special Education	Emma Havens Young Elementary School	Brick Township School District
Passaic	Barbara Ziegler	11th-12th	Science	Lakeland Regional High School	Lakeland Regional High School District

Salem	Jane Krajewski	4th	Elementary	Quinton Township School	Quinton Township School District
Somerset	Keith Schoch	6th	English Language Arts	Bedminster Township School	Bedminster Township School District
Sussex	Lorie Ann Jeskey	4th-7th	Special Education	Montague Township School	Montague Township School District
Union	Monica Goncalves	11th-12th	Social Studies	Linden High School	Linden School District
Warren	Kristin Baker	2nd-6th	Gifted and Talented	Mansfield Township Elementary School	Mansfield Township Elementary School District