



For Immediate Release
Date: August 12, 2025

Contact: [Michael Yaple](#)
(609) 376-9072

**New Jersey Department of Education Announces
2025-2026 County Teachers of the Year**

Ewing, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) today announced the 21 educators who have been named New Jersey’s 2025-2026 County Teachers of the Year. The educators were recognized at an awards ceremony today at The College of New Jersey in Ewing.

“Great teachers make for great schools, and New Jersey is home to the best public school system in the nation,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “I applaud this year’s 21 County Teachers of the Year for their hard work and dedication to uplift young learners across our state. These awardees exemplify the very best our schools have to offer, and I am immensely grateful for the contributions of these exceptional educators to our school communities.”

“The County Teachers of the Year celebrate the kind of dynamic and innovative instruction that we see in classrooms in school districts across New Jersey,” **said Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer**. “By recognizing these outstanding 21 County Teachers of the Year, we not only show appreciation for their exemplary dedication and contributions, but we elevate the hard work and dedication of the entire teaching profession. These County Teachers of the Year serve as an inspiration to a new generation of young minds who, one day, might explore a career in education themselves.”

Individual schools select Teachers of the Year, who are eligible to apply for County Teacher of the Year through the Governor’s Educator of the Year Program, an initiative designed to recognize the commitment and expertise of outstanding teachers and educational services professionals. More information is available on the [Governor’s Educator of the Year Program](#) webpage.

The County Teachers of the Year will network with colleagues throughout the state and serve as ambassadors for New Jersey’s public schools during the school year.

A panel of educators will select the New Jersey State Teacher of the Year from among the 21 County Teachers of the Year based on written applications, video submissions, and interviews with the top finalists. The New Jersey State Teacher of the Year will go on to represent New Jersey in competing for the title of National Teacher of the Year.

New Jersey's 2025-2026 County Teachers of the Year

County	Teacher	Position	School	School District
Atlantic	Christa Delaney	Environmental Science Teacher	Egg Harbor Township High School	Egg Harbor Township School District
Bergen	Aarti Mallya	Science Teacher	Pascack Hills High School	Pascack Valley Regional High School District
Burlington	Sean Hoggs	Senior Aerospace Science Instructor	Northern Burlington County Regional High School	Northern Burlington County Regional School District
Camden	Heide Kowalski	English Language Arts Teacher	Ann A. Mullen Middle School	Gloucester Township School District

County	Teacher	Position	School	School District
Cape May	JoDee Sattazahn	Spanish Teacher	Lower Cape May Regional High School	Lower Cape May Regional School District
Cumberland	Tiffanie ThrBak	Special Education Teacher	Cherry Street School	Bridgeton City School District
Essex	Andrew Vander Horn	Social Studies Teacher	Cedar Grove High School	Cedar Grove Township School District
Gloucester	Sandy Fitzpatrick	Kindergarten Teacher	Birches Elementary School	Washington Township School District
Hudson	John Palsi	Culinary Arts Instructor	County Prep High School	Hudson County Schools of Technology
Hunterdon	Caroline Mann	Special Education Teacher	Round Valley School	Clinton Township School District
Mercer	Shakida Faniel	Special Education Teacher	Joyce Kilmer Intermediate School	Trenton Public School District
Middlesex	Pamela Eng	Third Grade Teacher	Lincoln Elementary School	Edison Township School District
Monmouth	Gillian Ober*	English as a Second Language Teacher	Park Avenue Elementary School	Freehold Borough School District
Morris	Natasha Tyjer-Mendez	Fourth Grade Teacher	Riverdale Public School	Riverdale School District
Ocean	Jacqueline Castellano	Biology Teacher	Brick Township Memorial High School	Brick Township School District
Passaic	Alyssa Bitar	Engineering & STEM Teacher	Manchester Regional High School	Manchester Regional High School District
Salem	Robert Fitzpatrick	English Language Arts Teacher	Penns Grove Middle School	Penns Grove-Carneys Point Regional School District
Somerset	Kiran Masud	English Language Arts Teacher	Hillside Intermediate School	Bridgewater-Raritan School District
Sussex	Amy Stevens	English Language Arts Teacher	Byram Intermediate School	Byram Township School District
Union	Karen Carey-Lynch	English Language Arts & Gifted Education Teacher	Roselle Park Middle School	Roselle Park School District
Warren	Laura Wojick	Computer Science & Information Technology Teacher	Phillipsburg High School	Phillipsburg School District

* This teacher’s school at the time she was nominated is listed; she currently teaches at Freehold Intermediate School.