



New Hampshire

Department of Education

CELEBRATES THE NOMINEES FOR 2023 NEW HAMPSHIRE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Every day a New Hampshire teacher makes a difference in the life of a child. Every year the NH Department of Education honors outstanding educators who make their communities, profession, and the world a better place.

MENTOR
INSPIRE
EDUCATE
COACH
SHARE
INFLUENCE
INSTRUCT



▶ “I share the values of all teachers wanting their students to succeed academically and also understand that we can foster personal growth in our students with understanding and compassion at the same time. We work hard for our students, schools and communities. It is in ourselves to understand what drives us to be educators and share our passion for learning.”

CATHERINE BLAIS
WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH
MIDDLE SCHOOL
WILTON



Semi-Finalist

►“I have always been very proud of my role as an educator. I had incredible mentors when I first began my education journey. I make it my own goal of mentoring the younger generation entering this field. I share my expertise and experiences with them, have an open-door policy for anyone on my staff, and I especially like learning from them too.”

SUSAN BRADFORD
JAMES MASTRICOLA
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MERRIMACK



Semi-Finalist

▶ “We need to revitalize our educational system in New Hampshire to get our kids living and working, solving real world problems in our communities. We need to give them knowledge, reason and support to become active, engaged citizen and humans. Open their world view and build empathy and compassion towards other cultures, all living things, and themselves.”

AMANDA BRIDGES
JAMES FAULKNER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STODDARD



Semi-Finalist

▶ “Teaching is a human endeavor. Our students are not products; they are not output. Rather, every student is a person with hopes, fears, dreams and anxieties. The relationship between a teacher and a student is vital to establish mutual respect and trust.”

CHRISTIAN CHEETHAM
ALVIRNE HIGH SCHOOL
HUDSON



▶ “Routine is important in our lives and is doubly important in a classroom setting. It focuses attention and develops consistency that is required to build a community of learners. But it also develops the sense of ease that builds community.”

RODNEY CLARK
HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGH
SCHOOL
HOLLIS



▶ “Taking the time to get to know a student pays in dividends in the long run. For many students knowing that they matter to someone is enough to motivate them. The time and commitment that is gained when a child feels valued is immeasurable. Then not only have you educated a child, but you have also changed their life.”

JORDYNE CLOUGH
IDLEHURST ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL
SOMERSWORTH



▶ “If we as educators are tasked with modeling desired behavior for our students, we may as well model it for parents as well. As a classroom teacher, I view it as an essential part of my job to let the parents know what we are doing in my classes. Our school system allows us to email the parents of an entire classroom, which helps with communicating home about upcoming units, summatives and lessons. Parents have responded favorably to this outreach, and it has initiated some great conversations.”

KRISTIN DOYLE
PEMBROKE ACADEMY
PEMBROKE



▶ “I believe that the tools and resources I need the most are quality reading materials at every level to meet the needs of all my students and a math curriculum that aligns with the standards. I also believe that I need the support of my families each year and support from my administrators. Knowing that I am valued and trusted to educate my students and help them to become the best little people that they can be is what I feel is top on my list of needs to be successful.”

LISA DREW
BROAD STREET
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
NASHUA



▶ “Building a strong classroom community is one of the most important foundational practices a teacher can use to set the tone and pace for learning, as first students must feel safe and secure before they can truly excel at their educational journey.”

KERSTIN DUMAS
HIGHLAND-GOFFE'S FALLS
SCHOOL
MANCHESTER



Semi-Finalist

▶ “My students’ success and watching them blossom is what keeps me growing to be better at my practice. I work tirelessly to create a challenging, nurturing, learning environment for my students year after year. Establishing a successful and welcoming learning environment for every student to feel like they belong in a supportive, collaborative community, is the pillar of my philosophy.”

MIKELLA EICHEN
ATKINSON ACADEMY
ATKINSON



▶ “To have the time to work with peers on a common project is an important commodity for successful teachers. Sharing ideas with other teachers allow for the development of good and creative curriculum. To have the time to meet with other instructors and form a learning community that researches educational topics, develops research actions plans and discusses the findings of the research leads to successful teachers and enhanced learning for students.”

LINDA FERLAND
VILAS MIDDLE SCHOOL
ALSTEAD



▶ “The skills that my students build while working through word problems are invaluable to the rest of their high school career and post-secondary endeavors. Many people assume that these critical thinking skills are given at birth, but in reality our students need to be taught how to use information to form opinions, create equations and build resilience. It is in small group settings where I am able to give them a judgement free environment to make mistakes and build their math confidence.”

CAROLINE GAMBLE
BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL
BELMONT



▶ “As educators we need to start teaching our students at a young age that it is okay to make mistakes as long as you are trying and learn from the mistakes you make, especially in math! Thinking outside the box and working on problem solving is imperative to the learning process.”

AMANDA GARDNER
SOUTHSIDE MIDDLE
SCHOOL
MANCHESTER



► "I tell everyone that I am so blessed to have the best job in the world. To be able to love what you do is truly a blessing. To have a voice to share the positivity and even the struggles of this profession could help to guide changes that would be in the best interest of our children as we guide them through their educational journey."

KARA GORDON
HAMPSTEAD CENTRAL
SCHOOL
HAMPSTEAD



Semi-Finalist

▶ “As a teacher I believe the environment significantly shapes perspective and ultimately, shapes success. I strive to create a classroom environment where students feel physically and psychologically safe, challenged, and accepted for who they are and where they are.”

BONNIE HEATH
HAMPTON ACADEMY
HAMPTON



▶ “My classroom environment, expectations, and overall sense of learning lean more towards a sense of community, helpfulness, and engagement instead of high grades. I see my classroom as a venue for meaningful conversations, productive debates, lots of questioning, and many connections. When the students engage in these – they are successful.”

JENNIFER HOWARD
HAMPSTEAD MIDDLE
SCHOOL
HAMPSTEAD



▶ “I run my classroom similarly to the way I have run my home. I strive to create a positive and fun environment while being productive and reaching our goals. It’s a delicate balance but most days are successful. We share stories, have an occasional piece of candy and share some laughs all while learning about life science and moving through our curriculum.”

PAMELA HUGHES
SAINT CHRISTOPHER
ACADEMY
NASHUA



► “The most important aspect for me is that every child is treated like the special and unique individual that they are, no matter their social status, athletic abilities, or academic capabilities. I strive to meet every child where they are and to support their all-around growth. I hope to help every child see their individual gifts and take pride in who they are.”

KRISTIN JACQUES
MAPLE STREET
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
CONTOOCOOK



▶ “I create community within my classroom by incorporating social emotional learning into my lessons. With the support of engaging literature, we discuss topics such as empathy, inclusion, differences, friendship and perseverance. The book is always the source of inspiration for important discussions on topics that impact my students.”

MICHELLE JENKINSON
HOLDERNESS CENTRAL
SCHOOL
HOLDERNESS



▶ “During the first day of school we create class rules together. Involving the students in this process helps them to follow the rules better. It gives them ownership. It also shows the students that we are a team. We are learning together. I am guiding the learning, but I value their thoughts and opinions too.”

ERIKA JOYCE
SAINT CHRISTOPHER
ACADEMY
NASHUA



▶ “Success for my students means so much more than scores on academic tasks, although that is certainly one important goal that drives my instruction. Students who become self-aware and comfortable with their own learning strengths and weaknesses, and are empowered to act on their own behalf, self-advocating with their teachers, is the ultimate sign of success.”

POLLY KOCZALKA
BROAD STREET
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
NASHUA



Semi-Finalist

► “We all need to be part of a community. We need to be accepted for who we are, what we do, and not be judged but accepted for our individualities, uniqueness and generally be included. This is something I build not only within my classroom but with each of my families and the staff within my school building who will also be working with my students and their families.”

CARMEN KOSOW
NEW SEARLES
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
NASHUA



► “I adjust pacing as needed to accommodate the needs of students. Learning is what is most important to me, with curriculum pacing being secondary. Everything is scoped and sequenced, so if they have not mastered a concept, why would I move forward with teaching further concepts? I want students to feel supported in their learning, as all teachers do, and being flexible and adaptable to the needs of students is the number one trait a teacher must have in order to be successful in this profession.”

KRISTIN LECOMTE
PEMBROKE ACADEMY
PEMBROKE



▶ “For me to be successful in the classroom, I need to continue to hone my craft and challenge myself to be creative and to continually put the student in the forefront of everything I do. Throughout my education career, I have always had the opportunity to design my own lessons based on student interest. This is my gift!”

ROBIN LETENDRE
PINKERTON ACADEMY
DERRY



▶ “Language is at the heart of our environment. We participate in group as well as individual discussions each and every day on all sorts of topics and themes that are initiated by the children's curiosity. It is important for me as an educator that the young children in my class are heard, valued, acknowledged, and respected for who they are and for what they think.”

ANJALI LONGAN
MICROSOCIETY ACADEMY
CHARTER SCHOOL
NASHUA



▶ “A kindergarten student in my class is successful if they also have some independence. When a child has independence, they have confidence. All year, I practice independence skills with my students. It starts with simple things such as tying shoes and zippering jackets, but then it evolves into multi-step mathematical equations or writing sentences for a narrative book they are writing.”

AMANDA LOZEAU
SUNSET HEIGHTS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
NASHUA



Semi-Finalist

▶ “As far as ensuring students are connected to the world around them and that learning is happening everywhere, I find that is best achieved through literature. It is effortless to make connections between a book we are reading and current events, or even historical events.”

JENNIFER MACLEOD
HOLLIS BROOKLINE
MIDDLE SCHOOL
HOLLIS



► “I have known since the age of five years old that I wanted to be a teacher and I am dedicating my professional life to being the best possible teacher that I can be for my students and for the district that I work in. In my experience, most people enter into the teaching profession because of their passion for working with young people and making a difference in their lives.”

MOLLY MCCRUM
PEMBROKE ACADEMY
PEMBROKE



Semi-Finalist

▶ “At my best, I’m a connector. When a student expresses an interest, it’s my job to connect that student with the real estate agent, former Boston Globe reporter, HVAC installer, mechanical engineer, AmeriCorps member, or other source of knowledge that can foster that interest, take it from burgeoning curiosity to full-throated commitment.”

CURT MCDERMOTT
GOFFSTOWN HIGH
SCHOOL
GOFFSTOWN



▶ “Teaching through COVID has taught me and made me appreciate even more, that making and keeping connection with my students is my utmost priority. Once I make those connections, both academic and personal, it helps to build, create and manage the classroom community throughout the year.”

AUDRA MILLHOUSE
SAINT BENEDICT
ACADEMY
MANCHESTER



▶ “When working as a group, I encourage interaction between students so they can hear the hearts of one another and observe the learning that transpires between one another in the classroom setting. The class is taught to respect each other and be responsible citizens of our classroom.”

CYNTHIA MONAHAN
SOMERSWORTH HIGH
SCHOOL
SOMERSWORTH



► “Learning about other cultures is an essential tool that all students need for their future as they become part of a global community. The students love sharing what they learned via projects and fun class activities, and I even increased the membership to my International Club due to this interest. It is important that my students are both respectful and aware of the world around them and I love providing these opportunities to them.”

CAROYN MORSE
LONDONDERRY HIGH
SCHOOL
LONDONDERRY



▶ “I think middle school students often get caught up in how the concepts that we teach in school will help them in everyday life, but it is the skills that students practice – perseverance, risk-taking, critical thinking – that they will carry with them throughout their lives. This is what I emphasize to students in my lessons.”

ELISABETH MURPHY
HENRY W. MOORE
SCHOOL
CANDIA



▶ "A teacher must keep reviewing, exposing, and reinforcing skills that have been taught. I am always doing a quick review of a standard we have covered before I jump into another lesson. I'm extremely organized and use this personal skill to interpret data, reflect on my instruction and implement new strategies for my students to succeed."

LOUISE NORWAY
SUNSET HEIGHTS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
NASHUA



▶ “The structure and philosophy of our classroom this year has been incredibly successful for our students. Each school day flows as the students work in large groups, small groups, and independently between academics and choice/play time. The building of the classroom community and the built-in time to free play has created the structure to allow our students to succeed and grow in our integrated classroom.”

BARBARA O'BRIEN-LANE
BEAVER MEADOW
SCHOOL
CONCORD



► “Often in English class, literature is being discussed. A successful student is an active reader who annotates the text and takes notes on ideas. This allows for the students to find quotes and reference specific examples about characters and the plot to develop ideas and uncover themes. But a successful student does not rely on just oneself to make these discoveries.”

MARY PATE
SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS
HIGH SCHOOL
DOVER



▶ “I am always working on helping my students make connections between what they are learning: with themselves, others, and the world around them. The most seamless ways to incorporate these ideas are through reading diverse literature in all subject areas, weaving current events into our conversations, taking virtual field trips, playing multicultural games, and having authentic conversations.”

MAUREEN PATT
BROAD STREET
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
NASHUA



▶ “Creating a sense of community and inclusion is something I strive for every day. My goal is for each student to feel loved, special, and unbelievably valued in our classroom and school community. In my classroom, we celebrate our differences and promote friendships and acceptance. We learn from each other and place value in being our most authentic selves.”

HARRIETT PERRY
MAIN DUNSTABLE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
NASHUA



► “I am relatable, good-hearted, confident, and well-respected by my school community. I take pride in my profession, and I am constantly reflecting on and refining my practices in order to be a better teacher for my students. I hold high expectations for each generation of young adults and truly want to help them on their path to meeting those expectations.”

KRISTEN POWERS
NASHUA HIGH SCHOOL
NORTH
NASHUA



► “My daily goal as an educator is to prepare and offer a space of learning and encouragement for my students. Every day when my students enter the classroom, I want them to be aware and appreciate the safe space that is full of respect, acceptance, and encouragement. These attributes of my classroom community ultimately harbor their individual emotions and learning levels alongside their peers. This environment is absolutely crucial to helping a child be successful in their learning journey.”

JENNIFER SCOTT
ELLIS SCHOOL
FREMONT



Semi-Finalist

▶ “The courses I teach give students the opportunity to learn computer science curriculum that will become a lifelong skill. Computer programming has given so many students the ability to try something new and really think about how to solve problems. Many students who take programming never thought they could be successful in these courses.”

CATHI STETSON
OYSTER RIVER HIGH
SCHOOL
DURHAM



▶ “I like to help my students develop and strengthen their confidence and give guidance to achieve their goals. I want to create an environment where my students do not feel the way I felt years ago. My classroom is not teacher-based. I like to see my students open their hearts and be true to themselves, and in order to do this, I promote a learning environment where all of my students feel it is okay to make mistakes and learn from them.”

TRAN TRANG
SAINT CHRISTOPHER
ACADEMY
NASHUA



Semi-Finalist

► “The environment for success not only includes students but also includes the collaboration and support of my fellow teachers, the administration, and the parents of my students. Any communication I have is timely, especially when responding to emails. I treat others like I would want to be treated. Like with my students, reflective listening is key to truly hearing others, especially concerns. I strive to provide help when I can or figure out how to solve the problem and get others involved when needed.”

JULIE VERDE
SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS
HIGH SCHOOL
DOVER



► “Teaching is not predictable; the same students are different every day based on any number of factors and variables. In 18 years of teaching, I have learned that there are few challenges that can not be adjusted to with creativity, perseverance and, most importantly, commitment to meeting each individual student where they are at.”

ERIN WHITE
HOLLIS BROOKLINE
MIDDLE SCHOOL
HOLLIS