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### **State Board Recognizes 13 New Jersey Teachers for Presidential Awards**

The State Board of Education today honored 13 mathematics and science teachers for their accomplishments. All 13 of the teachers participated in the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Four of them received 2000 Presidential Awards, and nine were selected as state finalists for the 2001 program.

The four national award-winning teachers are: Helen Chang, an elementary science teacher at the West Windsor-Plainsboro Elementary School; Dianne Leoni, an elementary mathematics teacher at Amsterdam School, Hillsborough Township; Larry Ottman, a secondary mathematics teacher at the Haddon Heights Junior/Senior High School; and Martin Shields, a secondary science teacher at James Caldwell High School, Caldwell.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is the nation's highest honor for teachers of mathematics and science in grades K-12. Each award consists of a \$7,500 grant from the National Science Foundation to the recipient's school to be spent at the teacher's direction, and expense-paid activities in Washington D.C., during which the national award winners receive certificates signed by the President.

"Our honored teachers have demonstrated their excellence in teaching the critical subject areas of science and mathematics," said acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco. "I wish them the very best in their continuing quest to open new vistas of learning for New Jersey students."

"These teachers represent a premier group of science and mathematics professionals who bring national and state standards to life daily in their classrooms," said State Board President Maud Dahme. "Through their expertise and involvement in a wide range of activities, including curriculum development, research and ongoing professional development, they serve as models for their colleagues and leaders in the improvement of science and mathematics education."

"Congratulations to our national winners and state finalists for their achievements," said Commissioner of Education Vito A. Gagliardi, Sr. "Their credentials and accomplishments prove that they are among the very best of New Jersey's educators."

Teachers selected for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching are selected based on their teaching performance, background and experience, and their participation in activities both in and out of school that relate to their roles as teachers. Applicants must demonstrate how their teaching enables students to learn important processes and concepts in science and mathematics.

Each of the 2001 state-level finalists received a National Science Foundation state award for excellence and a \$750 cash award. A national selection committee will review the application packets of the state finalists and recommend a national winner for each state in each of the corresponding four categories: elementary mathematics, secondary mathematics, elementary science and secondary science.

The nine 2001 state finalists from New Jersey are:

- Loris Chen, a science teacher at North Arlington Middle School
- Michelle Colabraro, a science teacher at the Henry E. Harris School, Bayonne
- Stanley Krantz, a science teacher at Cherry Hill High School West
- Maria Niuitta, a mathematics teacher at Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan
- Rochelle Newman, a mathematics Teacher at the Thomas P. Grover Middle School, Princeton Junction.
- John O'Hara, a mathematics teacher at Kearny High School
- Cynthia Purcell, a mathematics teacher at the Frelinghuysen Middle School, Morristown
- Aldona Skrypa, a mathematics teacher at the Torey J. Sabatini School, Madison
- Paula Thatcher, a science teacher and science coordinator at the Henry E. Harris School, Bayonne.

The National Science Foundation began the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching in 1983 by inviting each state to nominate math and science teachers for consideration in the national program. Teachers must have taught science or mathematics for at least five years. Nominations are made by students, parents, administrators, teachers and others. Statewide panels of science and mathematics educators

select the state finalists, and national panels later select Presidential awardees from among the state finalists.

For more information, contact the Office of Innovative Programs and Practices at the New Jersey Department of Education, 609-777-0800.