



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Allegheny County Educator Named 2020 Teacher of the Year

Hershey, PA – Education Secretary Pedro A. Rivera announced today that Joseph Welch, a middle school teacher in the North Hills School District in Allegheny County, has been named the 2020 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made during the SAS Institute, the Pennsylvania Department of Education's annual professional development conference.

"Teachers make a difference every day in the lives of their students by inspiring and motivating them to learn," said Governor Tom Wolf. "It is my pleasure to congratulate Mr. Welch on receiving this distinguished honor and to thank the Teacher of the Year candidates and all educators for their dedication and service to our students."

Welch, who teaches American History at North Hills Middle School, is one of 12 Teacher of the Year finalists. Nominations for the Teacher of the Year were submitted by students, parents, peers, and members of the community wishing to honor and recognize educator achievements both inside and outside of the classroom.

As Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year, Welch will travel the state, meet, and collaborate with other educators, and will represent the commonwealth in next year's National Teacher of the Year competition.

"The Teacher of the Year program provides an opportunity to honor our talented educators and recognize them for inspiring students to embrace learning as a life-long journey and a pathway toward achieving their goals," said Secretary Rivera. "Over the next year, Mr. Welch will have the opportunity to engage with educators from around the state to share what he's done in the classroom and to discuss innovative approaches to teaching that can benefit our students."

The Teacher of the Year program is co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania chapter of the National State Teacher of the Year, which was founded in 1995.

Mr. Welch was chosen from among 12 finalists, including:

- Matthew Binder, Hempfield Senior High School, Hempfield School District (Lancaster County)
- Michele Bittner, West Penn Elementary School, Tamaqua Area School District (Schuylkill County)
- Amanda Connell, Northern Tier Career Center (Bradford County)
- Colleen Epler-Ruths, Shikellamy High School, Shikellamy School District (Northumberland County)
- Javius Galan, Wilson West Middle School, Wilson School District (Berks County)
- Leanne Jarossy, Central Bucks High School West, Central Bucks School District (Bucks County)
- William Melvin, Central Bucks High School South, Central Bucks School District (Bucks County)
- Katona Lyn Miller, South Scranton Intermediate School, Scranton School District (Lackawanna County)
- Kristen Moose, Dallastown Area Middle School, Dallastown Area School District (York County)
- Melissa Pierce, Pennypack Elementary School, Hatboro-Horsham School District (Montgomery County)
- Paolo Tolomeo, Haine Elementary School, Seneca Valley School District (Butler County)

Learn more about [Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year program](#) via PDE's website. Photos of this year's finalists are available on [PDE's Flickr site](#).

For more information about Pennsylvania's education policies and programs, please visit the [Department of Education's website](#). Follow PDE on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#), or [Pinterest](#).

Note: Photos and video from this event will be available at <http://www.pacast.com>.

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