



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2022

Beaver County Educator Named 2023 Teacher of the Year

Hershey, PA – Acting Secretary of Education Eric Hagarty today announced that Ryan D. Hardesty, an educator at Blackhawk School District in Beaver County, has been named the 2023 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made during the SAS Institute, the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s annual professional development conference.

“The reach of an excellent educator extends far beyond the walls of the classroom — great teachers set students up for a lifetime of opportunities,” said Hagarty. “The 12 Teacher of the Year finalists demonstrate exceptional leadership and commitment, and they all deserve our appreciation. On behalf of the Wolf Administration and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, we applaud Mr. Hardesty for his dedication to his students and school community.”

Hardesty teaches seventh- and eighth-grade social studies at Highland Middle School. His teaching philosophy is that “the goal of education is to meet the specific needs of the diverse set of learners that come into our classroom. To do so, we should plan engaging and rigorous work that pushes students to reach their full potential.”

Through the National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) Program, the Pennsylvania Department of Education identifies and honors exemplary teaching and classroom practices across the commonwealth. NTOY annually recognizes a professional who inspires students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn; who has the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues; and who plays an active and useful role in both school and community.

As Pennsylvania’s Teacher of the Year, Hardesty 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 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.

Hardesty was one of 12 finalists, including:

- Chris Grouzes, Rose Tree Media School District
- Julie A. Hussey, Cumberland Valley School District
- Brooke A. Menzen, Jersey Shore Area School District
- Jackie M. Miller, New Hope-Solebury School District
- Mary Beth Moslak, West Branch Area School District
- Abbey C. Nilson, Shaler Area School District

- Ashlee L. Peters-Roberts, Burrell School District
- Kristin J. Slota, Pennsbury School District
- Elizabeth “Liz” Taylor, School District of Philadelphia
- Jason A. Turka, Bethel Park School District
- Melissa B. Unger, South Fayette Township School District

Learn more about [Pennsylvania’s Teacher of the Year program](#) on PDE’s website.

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

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

MEDIA CONTACT: Kristin Boyd Edwards, kristedwar@pa.gov

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Pennsylvania Department of Education, [333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17001](#), United States
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