



# Pennsylvania Department of Education

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Erin James, [erinjames@pa.gov](mailto:erinjames@pa.gov)

## **Delaware County Educator Named 2025 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year**

**Hershey, PA** – Interim Acting Secretary of Education Angela Fitterer announced that Leon Smith, an educator at Haverford Township School District, has been named the 2025 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made during the SAS Institute, the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s annual professional development conference.

“Each year, Pennsylvania’s Teacher of the Year celebrates the educator who is ‘head of the class’—a teacher with the values, experience, and dedication needed to support their learners and set them up for success,” **said Interim Acting Secretary Fitterer.** “Mr. Smith perfectly exemplifies what it means to be an excellent educator, and his commitment to his school is making a lasting impact on his students, their families, and the surrounding community.”

Leon Smith is a secondary teacher at Haverford High School in the Haverford Township School District in Havertown. He has spent 22 years at the district and teaches 9th grade Honors and Advanced Placement Social Studies, as well as 10th-12th grade African American Studies. Mr. Smith holds a Bachelors in Secondary Social Studies Education from the University of Maryland at College Park, a Masters in Educational Leadership in Technology Integration from Pennsylvania State University, and a PK-12 Principal certification from Cabrini University.

As an educational leader, Mr. Smith strongly believes in helping all students reach their full potential. His dedication to his students goes beyond the classroom through his roles as the African American Cultural Enrichment Advisor, freshmen Boys’ Basketball Coach, and mentor. He is seen as a building leader and provides professional development for the district on culturally relevant teaching, growth mindset, elements of effective lessons, belonging strategies, and supporting historically marginalized students. Mr. Smith is an advocate for the teaching profession, committed to supporting new and future teachers by starting a Grow Your Own teacher program at Haverford Township School District. As a senior fellow for Teach Plus, an organization that focuses on developing teacher leaders, he works with others to advocate for policies that advance equity, opportunity, and student success.

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, Smith 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.

Smith was one of 12 finalists, including:

- Sherry Appleton, Middle Bucks Institute of Technology
- Anne Fisher, Downingtown Middle School, Downingtown Area School District
- Rob Hodgson, McDowell High School, Millcreek Township School District
- Jill Hyatt, Meadville Area Middle School/High School, Crawford Central School District
- Brooke Nenadal, Curtin Intermediate School, Williamsport Area School District
- Darla Romberger, Cumberland Valley High School, Cumberland Valley School District
- Bo Shappell, Daniel Boone Area High School, Daniel Boone Area School District
- Jennifer Sharek, Blackhawk Intermediate School, Blackhawk School District
- Leon Smith, Haverford High School, Haverford Township School District
- Kevin Tomlinson, Evergreen Elementary School, Perkiomen Valley School District
- Jennifer Toney, Sharpsville Area Elementary School, Sharpsville Area School District
- Jessica Waber, Julia R. Masterman Laboratory and Demonstration School, School District of Philadelphia

This year, 660 nominations were submitted for educators to be named 2025 Teacher of the Year.

The 2024 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year, named last December at PDE's SAS Institute, was Ashlie Crosson, a Grade 10 English, AP Language, & Journalism teacher at Mifflin County High School in the Mifflin County 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](http://www.pacast.com).

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