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Virginia Regional Teachers of the Year Named in Surprise Classroom Visits *All Eight in the Running for State Top Teacher Honor*

Eight educators learned of their selection today as Virginia 2009 Regional Teachers of the Year during surprise classroom visits made by Virginia Department of Education representatives.

“The educators recognized today represent not only their regions, but the more than 100,000 Virginia teachers who inspire and encourage students — while challenging them — to achieve at increasingly higher levels,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Billy K. Cannaday Jr.

The 2009 Regional Teachers of the Year announced are:

- Nicole C. Winter, a social studies instructor at Cosby High in Chesterfield County (Region 1)
- Sarah O.V. Lichtel, a third-grade teacher at Stonehouse Elementary in Williamsburg (Region 2)
- Kyle J. Toth, an English instructor at Massaponax High in Spotsylvania County (Region 3)
- Patricia R. Herr, a physical science teacher at Smart’s Mill Middle in Loudoun County (Region 4)
- Therese R. Warner, a prekindergarten instructor at McGaheysville Elementary in Rockingham County (Region 5)
- Stephanie A. Doyle, a U.S. History I teacher at Breckinridge Middle in Roanoke (Region 6)
- Teresa L. Hash, a third-grade instructor at Marion Intermediate in Smyth County (Region 7)
- Joy E. Utzinger, a visual arts teacher at Prince Edward County Elementary (Region 8)

The eight teachers were selected from among candidates nominated by their school divisions. The candidates prepared and submitted portfolios highlighting their professional accomplishments, educational philosophies and community activities. A panel of representatives of professional and educational associations, the business community and 2008 Virginia Teacher of the Year Thomas R. Smigiel Jr. of Norfolk reviewed the portfolios.

The panel will interview each of the eight [Regional Teachers of the Year](#) on October 24 to select the 2009 Virginia Teacher of the Year. The decision will be announced that evening during a celebration in Richmond.

The 2009 Virginia Teacher of the Year will be the commonwealth’s nominee in the National Teacher of the Year program, a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers, and sponsored by ING Foundation. Two previous Virginia teachers have gone on to become National Teacher of the Year: B. Philip Bigler, the 1998 Virginia Teacher of the Year, and Mary V. Bicouvaris, the 1989 Virginia Teacher of the Year.

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