

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Richmond Science Teacher is 2011 State Teacher of the Year**

LaTonya E. Waller, a science teacher at Lucille M. Brown Middle School in Richmond, was named the [2011 Virginia Teacher of the Year](#) Friday evening in Richmond. Waller was selected from the eight Virginia 2011 Regional Teachers of the Year announced in September. She will be the commonwealth's nominee in the Council of Chief State School Officers' National Teacher of the Year program, which is sponsored by ING Foundation.

Waller teaches sixth-grade and eighth-grade science and serves as chair of Brown Middle's science department. She coaches the school's "Mind Games" team and sponsors science, engineering and forensics clubs for students. In 2009, Waller received an R.E.B. Award for Teaching Excellence. The award included a \$10,000 grant for Waller to travel to Hawaii and Iceland to observe landforms and geological phenomena.

"LaTonya Waller instills in her students a love of learning and a commitment to community service," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright. "She is a mentor to her colleagues and epitomizes excellence in science instruction."

Waller is a product of Richmond Public Schools and a graduate of Richmond Community High School. She began her teaching career in 2001 at Broad Rock Elementary and moved to Brown Middle five years ago. Waller holds a bachelor's degree, a master's degree and a post-master's certificate in education leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University.

As the 2011 Virginia Teacher of the Year, Waller received a \$5,000 award and a ring from the Apple Federal Credit Union Education Foundation. She also received \$2,500 from Richmond law firm Allen, Allen, Allen & Allen; a classroom technology package from Smart Technologies ULC; a lapel pin from National Quality Products; educational opportunities from several public and private colleges and universities; flowers from Strange's Florists; and an engraved crystal apple.

The other seven regional teachers of the year received \$500 awards from the program sponsors; a technology package from Smart Technologies ULC; offers of educational benefits from several public and private colleges and universities; and lapel pins from National Quality Products. All eight teachers received laptop shoulder bags from Regent University and a 52-weeks supply of kids' meal cards from Chick-fil-A.

Waller was selected after being interviewed by a committee that included representatives of professional and educational associations, the business community and 2010 Virginia Teacher of the Year Catherine S. Webb of Giles County.

The 2011 National Teacher of the Year will be announced next spring in a White House ceremony. Two previous Virginia teachers of the year — Mary V. Bicouvaris in 1989 and B. Philip Bigler in 1998 — have gone on to become National Teacher of the Year.

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