



For Immediate Release

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Lynchburg 8th-Grade Teacher is 2012 State Teacher of the Year

Margaret A. “Meg” Smith, an eighth-grade English literature teacher at Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School for Innovation in Lynchburg, was named the 2012 Virginia Teacher of the Year Friday evening in Richmond. Smith was selected from the eight Virginia 2012 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.

Through the school’s “Writing Blitz” initiative, Smith encourages students to submit their writing for publishing and other recognition opportunities. She earned a bachelor’s degree in history from the College of William and Mary, master’s degrees in curriculum and instruction and educational leadership from Lynchburg College.

“Meg Smith is a beacon of excellence,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright. “Her commitment and her passion for what she teaches is a shining example of the difference a teacher can make in the lives of students every day.”

Smith has spent her entire 18-year teaching career at Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School. She currently serves as English Department chair, co-leader for the eighth-grade unit, leader of the “Achievement Period” committee, participant in the school’s “iPods in Instruction” grant and member of the gifted advisory committee.

As the 2012 Virginia Teacher of the Year, Smith 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; educational opportunities from several public and private colleges and universities; flowers from Strange’s Florist and Garden Centers; and an engraved crystal apple.

The other seven regional teachers of the year received \$500 awards from the program sponsors; a technology gift from Smart Technologies ULC; and offers of educational benefits from several public and private colleges and universities. All eight teachers received a lapel pin and “Be Our Guest” cards from McDonald’s Richmond Cooperative.

Smith was selected after being interviewed by a committee that included representatives of professional and educational associations, the business community and 2011 Virginia Teacher of the Year LaTonya E. Waller of Richmond Public Schools.

The 2012 National Teacher of the Year will be announced next spring at 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 Teachers of the Year.

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