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Virginia Teacher of the Year Makes “Final Four” ***Fairfax County’s Melissa Porfirio in Running for National Teacher of the Year***

Fairfax County teacher Melissa A. Porfirio is one of four finalists for 2014 National Teacher of the Year. Porfirio – who teaches first grade at Crestwood Elementary School in Springfield – was named the 2014 Virginia Teacher of the Year in October.

Last week, a panel representing 15 national education organizations selected Porfirio as one of four state teachers of the year for consideration as the nation’s top teacher. The Council of Chief State School Officers, which oversees the National Teacher of the Year Program, announced the panel’s decision today.

“Melissa Porfirio epitomizes the qualities that make Virginia teachers among the nation’s best,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright said. “She cares deeply about the academic progress and well-being of her students and is just as passionate about elevating her profession and helping new teachers achieve success in the classroom. She would be an outstanding representative for the nation’s teachers.”

A teacher for eight years, Porfirio earned a bachelor’s degree in social work from Catholic University and a master’s degree in education, curriculum and instruction from George Mason University.

In addition to her selection last year as the commonwealth’s top teacher and as regional teacher of the year for Northern Virginia, Porfirio was named 2013 Fairfax County Teacher of the Year. She also was one of 20 educators to receive the Washington Post’s Agnes Meyer outstanding teacher award.

Porfirio, and the other seven 2014 Virginia Regional Teachers of the Year, will be honored tomorrow (Thursday) by the General Assembly and the state Board of Education.

The other three finalists for 2014 National Teacher of the Year are:

- 2014 Florida Teacher of the Year Dorina M. Sackman, an English as a Second Language and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) teacher at Westridge Middle School in Orlando;
- 2014 Maryland Teacher of the Year Sean McComb, an English and AVID teacher at Patapsco High School and Center for the Arts in Baltimore; and
- 2014 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Ryan Devlin, an English and technology teacher at Brockway Area Junior/Senior High School in Brockway.

The 2014 National Teacher of the Year will be announced in April 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. The last teacher from the commonwealth selected as a finalist was 2008 Virginia Teacher of the Year Thomas R. Smigiel Jr., who is now an assistant principal at Norfolk’s Granby High School.

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