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Eight in the Running for 2020 Virginia Teacher of the Year *Commonwealth's Top Teacher Announcement October 7 in Richmond*

RICHMOND, Va. — Eight teachers today learned of their selection as 2020 Virginia Regional Teachers of the Year during surprise classroom visits, school assemblies and announcements.

First Lady Pamela Northam — a former elementary and high school teacher — was on hand in Loudoun County for the Region 4 announcement; Secretary of Education Atif Qarni — a former middle school and adult education teacher — participated in the Region 3 announcement in Northumberland County; and Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane was in Mecklenburg County for the Region 8 announcement.

“We can never do enough to celebrate the commonwealth’s outstanding teachers and the passion they bring to preparing young Virginians for success in school and beyond,” Northam said. “All of the educators selected today as 2020 Virginia Regional Teachers of the Year are recognized by their colleagues and school divisions as the best of the best.”

“We ask a lot of our teachers and the eight outstanding educators honored this morning represent the thousands of teachers in Virginia’s public schools who deliver every day by making a difference in the lives of their students and communities,” Qarni said. “Each of them is an ambassador for the teaching profession and the commonwealth’s public schools.”

“Our 2020 Virginia Regional Teachers of the Year represent different content areas and grade levels but they are all dedicated to providing challenging instruction that meets the needs of all of their students, regardless of background,” Lane said. “They are experts in the content they teach and in creating engaging activities, projects and assessments that incorporate the Five C’s: critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and citizenship.”

The eight 2020 Virginia Regional Teachers of the Year announced today are as follows:

- Gregory Patrick Lyndaker, an Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Psychology teacher at Henrico High in Henrico County (Region 1)
- Rachel Kathryn Thompson, an International Baccalaureate World Language Spanish and Advanced Placement Capstone Seminar teacher at Princess Anne High School in Virginia Beach (Region 2)
- Latasha Marlene Lee, a choral music teacher at Northumberland Middle and Northumberland High in Northumberland County (Region 3)
- Jennifer Renee Rodgers, an Advanced Placement United States and Comparative Government and Politics, Academic Government, Modern International Relations, and Global Social Issues teacher at Dominion High in Loudoun County (Region 4)
- Amy Marie Mallow, a second-grade teacher at Huddleston Elementary in Bedford County (Region 5)

(more)

- Andrea Carson Johnson, a 12th-grade English and English 12 College Preparatory teacher at Salem High in Salem (Region 6)
- Sarah Lea Deel, a science teacher at Marion Senior High in Smyth County (Region 7)
- Michelle Rae Howell, a special education teacher at LaCrosse Elementary in Mecklenburg County (Region 8)

The teachers were selected from among candidates nominated by school divisions in each of the state's eight superintendents regions. The candidates submitted portfolios highlighting their accomplishments, educational philosophies and community activities.

A panel, including classroom teachers, representatives of professional and educational associations, and the business community reviewed the portfolios and selected the eight regional teachers of the year. Next month, the panel will interview each of the eight regional teachers to select the 2020 Virginia Teacher of the Year. The decision will be announced on Monday, October 7 during a ceremony at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.

The 2020 Virginia Teacher of the Year will be the commonwealth's nominee in the National Teacher of the Year Program. The recognition is given by the Council of Chief State School Officers and program partners. Three previous Virginia teachers — B. Philip Bigler, the 1998 Virginia Teacher of the Year, Mary V. Bicouvaris, the 1989 Virginia Teacher of the Year, and Rodney A. Robinson, the 2019 Virginia Teacher of the Year — went on to be named National Teachers of the Year.

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