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CA Teacher Named 2012 National Teacher of the Year

April 23, 2012, Washington, DC – The Council of Chief State School Officers announced today that Rebecca Mieliwocki, a 7th grade English teacher in California is the 62nd National Teacher of the Year. Mieliwocki, along with all 2012 State Teachers of the Year will be recognized by President Barack Obama in a ceremony at the White House, on Tuesday, April 24.

Rebecca Mieliwocki is a 7th grade English teacher at Luther Burbank Middle School, which houses 1100 students in grades 6-8. She has been teaching for 14 years and has spent 9 years in her current position. Rebecca holds a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication from California Polytechnic State University and her professional clear credential in Secondary English Education from California State University Northridge. She is the 2005 California League of Middle Schools Educator of the Year for Southern California, a 2009 PTA Honorary Service Award Winner, and a BTSA mentor, and has also served as a teacher expert for CSUN College of Education Panel titled “The ABC’s of IEPs.”

“Rebecca Mieliwocki is an inspiration to her students, to me, and to every California teacher. She brings enormous energy, enthusiasm and optimism to teaching—a career that has never been more challenging, or more vital to our future,” said Tom Torlakson, California Superintendent of Public Instruction. “She’s the perfect choice for this tremendous honor, and I know she’ll do an outstanding job of teaching the nation about the great things happening every day in California’s public schools.”

"Students learn best when they have the most enthusiastic, engaged teachers possible," says Mieliwocki. “I firmly believe that teachers must be held accountable for their students’ success, from helping them meet personal or school-wide learning goals to achieving on district and state level assessments. Our students are our future, so we, their teachers, must do our best to inspire them and guide them to greatness.”

For more information about the National Teacher of the Year program, click here. To arrange an interview with her please contact Kate Dando (kated@ccsso.org) or Paul Ferrari
President Barack Obama will honor the 2012 National Teacher of the Year and all of the State Teachers of the Year at the White House April 24 at 10:05 am EDT.

A panel of educators, representing 15 national education organizations, chose the finalists from the 2012 state teachers of the year in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and four U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. State teachers of the year are selected on the basis of nominations by students, teachers, principals, and school district administrators throughout the states. Applications are then submitted to CCSSO, where the national selection committee reviews the data on each state candidate and selects the four finalists. The selection committee then personally interviews each finalist before naming the National Teacher of the Year. The finalists for 2012 National Teacher of the Year are Gay Barnes (Alabama), Alvin Davis (Florida), and Angela Wilson (Department of Defense Education Activity).
Rebecca Lynn Mieliwocki

2012 National Teacher of the Year
7th Grade English Teacher
Luther Burbank Middle School
Burbank, California

Click on images to download these photos in high resolution format.

Rebecca Mieliwocki is a 7th grade English teacher at Luther Burbank Middle School, which houses 1100 students in grades 6-8. She has been teaching for 14 years and has spent 9 years in her current position. Rebecca holds a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication from California Polytechnic State University and her professional clear credential in Secondary English Education from California State University Northridge. She is the 2005 California League of Middle Schools Educator of the Year for Southern California, a 2009 PTA Honorary Service, and a BTSA mentor, and has also served as a teacher expert for CSUN College of Education Panel titled “The ABC's of IEPs.” A child of two veteran public school teachers, Rebecca initially shied away from becoming a teacher, but she soon realized there is “no nobler profession” than teaching. Her own K-12 teachers serve as her heroes and she models her teaching style on the example they set for her. She works hard to provide her students with exciting and dynamic lessons that are both educational and amusing.

Rebecca says, "Students learn best when they have the most enthusiastic, engaged teachers possible." She believes strongly in the importance of good teacher preparation programs, continuous support and collaboration opportunities for veteran teachers, and a strong school leadership team to guide and drive achievement. She values the teaching profession as a sought after career and one that can transform our nation for the better. She says, “I firmly believe that teachers must be held accountable for their students’ success, from helping them meet personal or school-wide learning goals to achieving on district and state level assessments. Our students are our future, so we, their teachers, must do our best to inspire them and guide them to greatness."
Support for Rebecca Mieliwocki

“Rebecca Mieliwocki is an inspiration to her students, to me, and to every California teacher. She brings enormous energy, enthusiasm and optimism to teaching—a career that has never been more challenging, or more vital to our future,” said Tom Torlakson, California Superintendent of Public Instruction. “She’s the perfect choice for this tremendous honor, and I know she’ll do an outstanding job of teaching the nation about the great things happening every day in California’s public schools.”

“Rebecca is a truly gifted educator. She is a master of her content and her pedagogy and raises the bar for all our teachers,” said Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers. “CCSSO is proud to house this prestigious program and congratulates every 2012 State Teacher of the Year. It is critical that we shine the spotlight on our nation’s best educators and continue the national dialogue about how to provide every student in America with a high-quality public education.”

"Target is thrilled to recognize Rebecca as a passionate and innovative educator who is wholeheartedly devoted to her students' success," said Laysha Ward, President, Community Relations, Target. "Through our unique programs and partnerships, Target is proud to support teachers like Rebecca who are making significant strides in advancing the education of our students. We commend Rebecca on this well-deserved honor."

"ING congratulates Mrs. Mieliwocki on this distinction and the other state winners for their commitment to children across the country," said Rhonda Mims, President ING Foundation and Senior Vice President of ING U.S.’s Office of Corporate Responsibility. "We believe in the importance of honoring excellence in education and recognizing educators who are tapping into our children's potential and engaging them to unleash their continued success."

“At People to People Ambassador Programs, we depend on excellent teachers to provide incredible learning experiences for our students throughout the world. That is why we are so excited to honor the 2012 National Teacher of the Year, Rebecca Mieliwocki, who brings an incredible spirit and appreciation for learning beyond the classroom,” said Peg Thomas. President, People to People Ambassador Programs. “She, along with all the state teachers of the year, proves that we have some of the best teachers in the world”

“It is our honor to congratulate Rebecca Lynn Mieliwocki, the 2012 National Teacher of the Year!” said Dr. Meredith Curley, dean of the College of Education, University of Phoenix. “Ms. Mieliwocki has said, ‘Life is too short and too difficult to have anything less than the most engaged, enthusiastic teachers in schools.’ We couldn’t agree more. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to students, and thank you for being a true leader in education.”

“It is a tremendous honor to see Rebecca recognized as Teacher of the Year,” said Brian O’Rourke, Principal of Luther Burbank Middle School. “Her passion for kids and her mastery of the art of teaching remind us all of the reason why we went into teaching.”
Overview of the National Teacher of the Year Program

The National Teacher of the Year Program

The National Teacher of the Year (NTOY) Program began in 1952 and is the oldest, most prestigious national honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. The NTOY is chosen from among the State Teachers of the Year by a National Selection Committee representing the major national education organizations. Each year, the NTOY is introduced to the American people by the President of the United States.

Becoming National Teacher of the Year

Participation in the NTOY Program is available through the State Teacher of the Year Program. Each year the 50 states, five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity name a state teacher of the year. Within the states the selection processes vary, but each state conducts a rigorous selection procedure in validating the State Teacher of the Year’s abilities in the classroom and in communicating the recipient’s message to a broad audience.

A National Selection Committee, composed of representatives from fourteen national education organizations, meets to choose four finalists from the nominations received. The committee conducts personal interviews with the finalists to select the NTOY.

The National Selection Committee is represented by these esteemed organizations: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), American Association of School Administrators (AASA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), ASCD, Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), National Education Association (NEA ), National PTA, Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) National School Boards Association (NSBA), National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA)

Duties of the National Teacher

During the official year of recognition, the NTOY is released from classroom duties to travel nationally and internationally as a spokesperson and advocate for the teaching profession. The NTOY may be called upon to represent American educators to audiences in other nations. NTOYs are frequently requested to sit on national and state commissions and policy advising bodies.
Request the National Teacher of the Year
All scheduling and logistical arrangements for the National Teacher are coordinated by the National Program. Organizations or individuals that request the services of the National Teacher bear all expenses associated with that request. Honoraria for the National Teacher are not requested but accepted if offered.

To request the National Teacher of the Year, please [click here].

For questions please contact Andy Drewlinger ([andyd@ccsso.org](mailto:andyd@ccsso.org))

By mail:
National Teacher of the Year Program
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001-1431

Requests for the National Teacher are filled to provide the broadest representation for the teacher both thematically and geographically.
Join the Conversation
#NTOY12 Social Media Campaign

Twitter (@CCSSO, #NTOY12)
All tweets pertaining to the National Teacher of the Year Announcement will be organized under the #NTOY12 hashtag. Please use this #NTOY12 hashtag and follow @CCSSO to join this conversation celebrating excellence in education.

Facebook (http://www.facebook.com/ccsso)
CCSSO's Facebook page will be the hub for media about the National Teacher of the Year Announcement. Please check http://www.facebook.com/ccsso for pictures, videos, and news featuring the National Teacher of the Year and all of the State Teachers of the Year as they are recognized in Washington, DC April 23-27.