



DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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## **CSDE counts down to start of school with celebration of teachers**

(HARTFORD, CT)—Great teachers make a difference in the lives of students every day, and as Connecticut gears up for a new school year the State Department of Education will be celebrating teachers who exemplify what is best about the profession.

The Department will be featuring the 2016 Connecticut Teacher of Year finalists and semifinalists on its website as a way to promote the great work of these teachers and honor their commitment to kids.

Connecticut's 2016 Teacher of the Year, Jahana Hayes, a high school history teacher from Waterbury, was selected as the National Teacher of the Year. She is dedicating her year in the spotlight to elevating the voice of teachers worldwide.

"The 2016 Connecticut Teacher of Year, finalists, and semifinalists are an excellent group of educators who have inspired a love for learning in their students and distinguished themselves in the profession," said Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell. "We are so grateful for all of our amazing teachers and school leaders in Connecticut who are making a real difference for kids."

To be considered for Teacher of the Year honors, candidates are asked about the factors that influenced them to become teachers and what they consider to be their greatest contributions and accomplishments in education.

"As a Connecticut teacher, I find their personal stories to be an endless source of inspiration and I think we can all learn something from all of our teachers," Commissioner Wentzell said. "We want to make sure every student has access to highly effective educators who have the instructional skills and wisdom to engage students in meaningful learning and help them grow."

"Empowering and supporting teachers enhances the profession of education and positively impacts the students we have the privilege of knowing, teaching, and learning from every day. The Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council values this campaign as another way to recognize, celebrate, and honor the thousands of Connecticut's teachers who carry out such important work," said David Bosso, president of the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council and 2012 Connecticut Teacher of the Year.

The teachers will be featured on the Department's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts, along with the hashtag #CTTOY2016, where people can learn more about their work, the subjects they teach, and the paths that led them into the profession. You can also read about the [Connecticut Teacher of the Year, finalists, and semi-finalists](#) on the CSDE website.

The 2016 Connecticut Teacher of the Year finalists were Daniel Clement, a business teacher from Somers; Dylan Connor, a Stratford Latin teacher; and Shaun Mitchell, who teaches English language arts and theatre in Bridgeport.

The semifinalists were Hamden AP government teacher David Coss; Naugatuck's Tiffany Deitelbaum, who has transitioned to administration; Weston grade 5 teacher Adrienne Dunn; Westport ELA teacher Kimberly Herzog; New Britain social studies teacher Evelyn Hudyma; Region 15 science teacher Brian Jehning; Bolton social studies teacher Mark Mishriky; Granby social studies teacher Jodi Okenquist; Plainfield career and technical education instructor Robert Riley; Andrea Sias, a Bloomfield science teacher; Laurie Sweet, an art teacher in Region 6; and CREC math teacher Chimma Uche.

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