



For Immediate Release:

October 3, 2017

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## First-Grade Teacher from Wallingford Named 2018 Connecticut Teacher of the Year

(WALLINGFORD, CT) — Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell announced today that Erin Berthold, a first-grade teacher from Wallingford, has been selected as the 2018 Connecticut Teacher of the Year. State and local officials joined Mrs. Berthold at Cook Hill School this afternoon to deliver the good news to her students, colleagues, and the community.



*Erin Berthold*

Mrs. Berthold has been an early childhood educator at Cook Hill School since 2015. Before that, she was a special education teacher at Yalesville Elementary and Moses Y. Beach Elementary School, also in Wallingford. Earlier in her career, Mrs. Berthold worked at both the middle and high school levels at Lincoln Middle School in Meriden and Woodhouse Academy in Milford.

“Teachers make a real difference in the lives of the students they serve,” Governor Dannel P. Malloy said. “As an early childhood educator, Mrs. Berthold has the opportunity to inspire a love of learning and set up her students for lifelong success. Congratulations to Mrs. Berthold on being named the 2018 Teacher of the Year and thank you to all of our educators for the work that you do each day on behalf of Connecticut children.”

“I want to congratulate Mrs. Berthold on becoming the Connecticut Teacher of the Year. She has inspired our youngest students in the classroom and set them up to embrace lifelong learning,” said Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman. “We are fortunate to have extraordinary educators here in Connecticut, and thank them all for their work.”

“Today we celebrate the pride we take in our teachers for being out front every day making dreams possible for our students,” Commissioner Wentzell said. “Teachers are called upon to stir intellect and ignite passion in their students. They come to the classroom as learners themselves, ready to share knowledge, engage in thoughtful dialogue, and inspire new ideas. Erin Berthold exemplifies all of this in her daily work with our youngest learners.”

Erin originally planned to pursue a degree in the arts and went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in digital media from Marist College. Inspired by her mother’s work with young children as a

teacher in a small town in New York, Erin blended her interests in the arts and education and pursued a master's degree in teaching, childhood, and special education from St. Thomas Aquinas College. Ten years later, she says that she can't imagine herself doing anything else. She considers it a privilege to work with children of all ages, and aspires to help them to become their best selves.

"I encourage students to take action," she said. "They may encounter some bumps along the way, but the best and deepest learning occurs when students reroute themselves. I believe children need to learn to make decisions regarding their own learning at an early age, so they are prepared to make life decisions. I encourage students to try new things, pursue their interests, and see failure as an opportunity for growth."

"We are thrilled that Wallingford Education Association member Erin Berthold is the 2018 Connecticut Teacher of the Year," said CEA President Sheila Cohen. "Erin will be a passionate and enthusiastic ambassador for the teaching profession. Her love for her students and her profession is infectious. She is always thinking up new ways to engage and motivate her students, and she excels at creating a positive learning environment to help her students soar. Erin recognizes that the key to engaging students in the classroom is drawing upon their imaginations, making connections, and fostering critical thinking."

"Erin Berthold is a transformational educator," said Salvatore Menzo, Wallingford superintendent of schools. "Each year she personally challenges her students to grow with her. It is astounding to see the difference she makes with every child and family. The entire Wallingford School District is so proud of Erin and this incredibly deserving accomplishment."

Kristine Friend, principal at Cook Hill School said, "Erin Berthold is one of the most dedicated and valued members of our education community. Her thirst for knowledge, passion for children, and creative out-of-the-box thinking motivates and personalizes learning for each of her students. Her desire to work with families and colleagues allows everyone to experience success. The Cook Hill School community congratulates her on this most prestigious honor."

"On behalf of the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council, we congratulate Erin Berthold for her recognition as the 2018 Connecticut Teacher of the Year," said Dr. David Bosso, president of the council. "Each year, we have an amazing group of district teachers of the year and we are proud to know that they, like thousands of teachers, make a difference in the lives of their students every day. Erin is an excellent representative of our profession, and we look forward to working with her and her fellow district teachers of the year during their year of honor."

A statewide committee of former teachers of the year and representatives from a variety of education organizations selected Mrs. Berthold from among four finalists, 15 semifinalists, and over 100 district-level teachers of the year.

The Connecticut Teacher of the Year and Teacher of the Year finalists serve as ambassadors for public education. They have the opportunity to serve on a variety of advisory committees at the state and national levels. They speak at workshops and conferences; address student, civic, university, and governmental groups; and can operate special programs related to their individual interests and expertise. The 2018 Connecticut Teacher of the Year will also represent the state in the National Teacher of the Year Program, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Berthold succeeds 2017 Connecticut Teacher of the Year, Lauren Danner, a science teacher at North Branford High School.

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