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Joel I. Klein
Chancellor

CHANCELLOR KLEIN CONGRATULATES WINNERS OF THE INAUGURAL TEACHING FELLOW AWARDS FOR CLASSROOM EXCELLENCE

Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein today will commend the classroom achievements of twenty New York City public school teachers who entered the profession through the Department of Education's NYC Teaching Fellows alternative certification program. Six NYC Teaching Fellows, including one first-year teacher, were selected from more than 250 applications to receive the NYC Teaching Fellows Award for Classroom Excellence (ACE). The awards recognize teachers who were instrumental in raising student achievement and served important leadership roles in their schools. Fourteen finalists were also named. The winners and finalists will be honored this evening at 5:30 p.m. during an award ceremony at 31 Chambers Street in Manhattan.

"I am overjoyed to recognize the contributions of these talented teachers," Chancellor Klein said. "Teaching Fellows work in some of our toughest schools and in subject areas like math or science where their expertise might qualify them for a much higher paying job. In the eight years since the program began, we have seen the qualifications of teachers in traditionally hard-to-staff schools dramatically improve thanks to Teaching Fellows like those we applaud today."

More than 750 nominations and 250 applications for ACE honors were submitted. Applications included personal essays, letters of recommendation, and a resume. They were reviewed by a selection committee of NYC Teaching Fellows staff who narrowed the pool to 20 finalists. Each finalist was interviewed and observed in the classroom, and the six winners were selected by senior staff from the DOE, the New Teacher Project, and the Wachovia Foundation, which provided support for the ACE. The selection committee assessed the candidates based on their record of educational accomplishments, effect on student achievement, teaching vision, and contribution to the school community. The winners receive \$2,500 and a \$500 classroom grant, and the finalists receive \$250.

The NYC Teaching Fellows program was created in 2000 to recruit talented non-traditional teaching candidates to work in the City's hardest-to-staff schools and in high-need subject areas like math, science, and special education. Currently, 8,300 Teaching Fellows make up more than 11% of the total teaching force, including 16% of the teachers in the Bronx, as well as 25% of all math and 20% of all special education teachers in the City. This is the fourth year the Wachovia Foundation has provided support for the NYC Teaching Fellows program.

Below is a list of the Teaching Fellow Award for Classroom Excellence winners:

Eric Ashton, earth science teacher at Marta Valle Secondary School (M509); Fellow since 2003
Eric Ashton was on track to receive a medical degree from Columbia University when he changed paths and became a NYC Teaching Fellow. Now in his fifth year of teaching and his second as an Earth Science and lead science teacher at the Marta Valle Secondary School in Manhattan, Ashton's students regularly excel on the Earth Science Regents exam, far exceeding citywide average scores.

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Sine Bayar, special education teacher at Bronx High School for the Visual Arts (X418); Fellow since 2003

As a special education teacher at the Bronx High School for the Visual Arts, Sine Bayar has helped her students realize gains in reading skills by as much as four grade levels. She has also been instrumental in helping students develop vocational skills and internship experience by creating COOP Teach, a vocational training program, and maintaining partnerships with a range of leading organizations.

Megan Cahill, English teacher at Bushwick Leaders' High School for Academic Excellence (K556); Fellow since 2005

In her three years of teaching, Megan Cahill has received two UFT grants that allowed her English students at the Bushwick Leaders' High School for Academic Excellence to teach memoir writing to sixth graders and to interview and write about cancer patients in local hospitals. Each year, she publishes an anthology of her students' work and leads a daily double period for English Language Learners and special education students to help them perform well on the English Regents exam.

Ashley Hodge, special education teacher at PS 186X: The Damrosch Day Treatment School; Fellow since 2006

A graduate of NYC public schools, Ashley Hodge is in her second year as a District 75 teacher and has already established herself as a leader at The Damrosch Day Treatment School. She has implemented a number of reading programs, including the Voyager Passport Reading Program, Wilson's Foundations, and Achieve 3000, a differentiated instruction program.

Evan Weinberg, math and physics teacher at Herbert H Lehman High School (X405); Fellow since 2003

After graduating with an engineering degree from Tufts University, Evan Weinberg joined the faculty at Herbert H. Lehman High School, where he started the robotic teams and works with students to build robots for the FIRST Robotics Competition. In 2005, he initiated a successful AP physics program at Lehman, and in the first two years of his AP course, Weinberg saw 100 percent of his students earn college credit.

Heather Lawrence, collaborative team teacher for math and science at Urban Assembly School for Wildlife Conservation (X372); Fellow since 2007

When the principal of the Urban Assembly School for Wildlife Conservation selected the 20 top academic performers in his school, half of them were in Heather Lawrence's class. A first-year teacher, Lawrence is already emerging as a leader in her school by serving on the school's Data Inquiry team.

Below is a list of the Teaching Fellow Award for Classroom Excellence finalists:

Amy Basile, math teacher at Essex Street Academy (M294); Fellow since 2003

Eric Butterbaugh, math teacher at Bread & Roses Integrated Arts High School (M685); Fellow since 2004

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Francis Dsouza, 8th grade math teacher at I.S. 190X; Fellow since 2003

Stephen Epstein, special education art teacher at Stephen McSweeney School (X721); Fellow since 2003

Nse Etukudo, math teacher at Harry S. Truman High School (X455); Fellow since 2003

Cristina Jacobs, math and science teacher at Bronx Expeditionary Learning High School (X227); Fellow since 2006

Christine Mastrantonio, math teacher at Richmond Hill High School (Q475); Fellow since 2005

Danielle May, math teacher at Louis D. Brandeis High School (M470); Fellow since 2004

Yen Pham, special education science teacher at Chelsea High School (M615); Fellow since 2004

Rebekah Shoaf, English teacher at Urban Assembly School of Design and Construction (M300); Fellow since 2003

Steven Sibol, math teacher at High School for Civil Rights (K504); Fellow since 2003

Binh Thai, humanities teacher at University Neighborhood Middle School (M322); Fellow since 2000

John Dodd, English language arts teacher at Lola Rodriguez De Tio Junior High School (X162); Fellow since 2007

Christina Gonzalez, science teacher at Health Opportunities High School (X670); Fellow since 2007

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