



NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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Connecticut Great Teachers Essay Contest Winner and Finalists

The Connecticut State Department of Education is proud to announce the winner of the Connecticut Great Teachers Essay Contest. For the contest, we asked students to tell us about a teacher who has inspired them to learn, grow, and rise to their potential.

Seventh-grader Samuyel Islam of Park City Magnet School in Bridgeport was selected as the winner for the essay he wrote about his fifth-grade teacher, Charles Council. Samuyel was presented with a certificate of achievement at his school on May 9, Teacher Appreciation Day.

Congratulations to Samuyel and the 10 finalists listed below:

1st Place

Samuyel Islam

Grade 7

Park City Magnet School, Bridgeport

Inspirational Teacher: Mr. Charles Council

"He also gave me hope. At that time I was dealing with bullies. He stood out and helped me with my problems even after 5th grade. I had a connection with him as he was also my 6th grade math teacher."

Finalists

Rakshit Bisoi

Grade 5

East Windsor Middle School, East Windsor

Inspirational Teacher: Mr. David Bidwell

"Now, every time my plan or strategy doesn't work, I keep on trying and I don't let frustration take over. I can also brainstorm a lot faster than I used to and develop more reasonable and explanatory answers for the problems that I have to solve. I just can't thank him enough for this."

Audrey Carr

Grade 5

Saxe Middle School, New Canaan

Inspirational Teacher: Mrs. Caitlin Portanova

"My teacher Mrs. Portanova has inspired me to be a teacher when I grow up. I want to help kids who have trouble learning in schools just like she does."

Rinaz Jamal

Grade 4

Geraldine Johnson School, Bridgeport

Inspirational Teacher: Ms. Jane Asprelli, Kids Empowered by Your Support

"Her passion for music made me passionate about music, too."

Sumara St. Onge

Grade 7

Westbrook Middle School, Westbrook

Inspirational Teacher: Ms. Amy Callahan

"I love all of my teachers, but if I had to choose a favorite, it's Ms. Callahan. She has taught me so many practical writing tricks and teaches everything in a fun way."

Scott Minnick

Grade 5

Center School, East Hampton

Inspirational Teacher: Ms. Patricia Finch

"When I wanted to quit, she would tell me to be patient and keep trying. After some time, I finally got it. This taught me to never give up, even if things get difficult."

Bennett Murphy

Grade 7

Lebanon Middle School, Lebanon

Inspirational Teacher: Mr. Nic Magliocco

"As a young male teacher, he has been a role model for many middle school students including myself. Mr. Mags inspires me to learn through humor and makes learning fun and interesting. He loves to joke with students and shares stories that we can relate to."

Katelyn Parrott

Grade 6

Lincoln Middle School, Meriden

Inspirational Teacher: Ms. Carrie DePetris

"She inspires the act of questioning and change with both the material she teaches and the way she expresses it. She teaches with the excitement of one learning for the first time, and this passion flows directly into her students."

Megan Quinn

Grade 6

Broadview Middle School, Danbury

Inspirational Teacher: Mrs. Noreen Bach

"Mrs. Bach inspires me because she looks for a way to help every single student she has the chance to help. In other words, Mrs. Bach has also inspired me because whenever I go to math class she educates everyone the absolute best she can so that everyone understands."

Peyton Zaletsky

Grade 6

South School, New Canaan

Inspirational Teacher: Mr. Michael Herold

"All of this generosity has taught me that being nice to other people will mean that they will be nice back to you. You should always be generous because that will get you far in life."

Zuzanna Zegarzewski

Grade 5

Mahan Elementary School, Norwich

Inspirational Teacher: Ms. Sheryl Scheidel

"Ms. Scheidel has inspired me by always being encouraging. She taught me to put my heart into music and to work through mistakes."

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