



# NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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## **CONNECTICUT SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER JAHANA HAYES NAMED 2016 NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

*Kennedy High School will hold celebration to honor Jahana Hayes as National Teacher of the Year at 10 a.m. Friday*

Jahana Hayes, a social studies teacher at John F. Kennedy High School in Waterbury, has been named the 2016 National Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made Thursday morning by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), which administers the program.

Hayes was named Connecticut Teacher of the Year in October and was honored at an awards ceremony in November at the Bushnell in Hartford. Her career as an educator goes back 13 years with the most recent 11 years in Waterbury. Her role as a social studies teacher extends beyond the walls of her classroom and into the community where she encourages her students to be active in projects that help their neighbors and improve the world around them.

“I am honored to be the 2016 National Teacher of the Year,” Hayes said. “In the course of the next year, I hope to stoke a national conversation about education that is inclusive of everyone. I want to engage people who have not traditionally been part of the conversation to join in this important effort to prepare well-rounded students for success in life.”

Hayes cites personal experiences as her reason for becoming a teacher. She is the first in her family to attend college, and gratefully recalls teachers in her life who let her borrow books to read at home. Today, she passes on this work by promoting cultural awareness and developing service learning curriculum for her school and community.

“Teachers like Jahana Hayes are leading the way to a brighter future for America. What an exceptional educator – we are all proud,” said Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy. “Extraordinary academic rigor, high expectations, and unwavering commitment to service outside the classroom are the characteristics that Jahana brings to Waterbury students each and every day. She is truly preparing the next generation of global citizens. I want to congratulate Jahana and thank her for making a difference in the lives of so many Connecticut children and families.”

“Jahana Hayes is a teacher who truly cares about the students in her classroom—and the people they are in their communities,” said Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman. “Our teachers are the key to academic success. They change the lives of our young people, shaping the next generation and inspiring them to build a better world. We applaud Jahana’s commitment and dedication to her students and to Connecticut’s future.”

“Jahana Hayes inspires her students to believe in their ability to change the world. She ignites a love of learning and builds their self-confidence. This well-deserved distinction provides Jahana the platform and opportunity to share her gifts, passion, and talent with students and educators across the nation. Without question, Jahana will inspire others to believe in the power of teachers to change the world through education,” said Connecticut Department of Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell. “Connecticut is so proud of Jahana. She is a true role model for educators across the nation who seek to deliver on the promise of an outstanding education for every student.”

“CCSSO is honored to support the nation’s great teachers, and I am excited that people across the nation and the world will soon learn from Jahana Hayes’ commitment to education,” said Chris Minnich, executive director of CCSSO.

“To be the National Teacher of the Year requires not only pedagogical precision, but also the ability to connect to the hearts and minds of a school community,” said Waterbury Superintendent Kathleen M. Ouellette. “Jahana’s own life experience, her passion for education, and the inspirational manner in which she impacts her students, all contribute greatly to her success. Jahana has masterfully refined a focused, pragmatic, yet heartfelt approach to an evolving global vision of education, bringing her to this pinnacle – the 2016 National Teacher of the Year! We in Waterbury, Connecticut are very proud!”

"The Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council is thrilled that Jahana Hayes has been recognized as the 2016 National Teacher of the Year. Her enthusiasm and passion for teaching and learning are contagious. We are privileged to know her and work with her, and we know that she will continue to be a powerful, compassionate voice working tirelessly to elevate our profession and to empower our students,” said David Bosso, president of the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Council and 2012 Connecticut Teacher of the Year.

There will be a school-wide celebration featuring Jahana Hayes and her students on Friday at Kennedy High School. Members of the media are invited to attend. Details are as follows:

- **WHO:** National Teacher of the Year Jahana Hayes, Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman, Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell, Waterbury students, teachers and leaders.
- **WHAT:** Celebration to honor Jahana Hayes as National Teacher of the Year
- **WHEN:** 10 a.m., FRIDAY, April 29
- **WHERE:** John F. Kennedy High School, 422 Highland Ave, Waterbury, CT

The National Teacher of the Year program, run by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and presented by Voya Financial, Inc., identifies exceptional teachers in the country, recognizes their effective work in the classroom, engages them in a year of professional learning, amplifies their voices, and empowers them to participate in policy discussions at the state and national levels.

As the 2016 National Teacher of the Year, Hayes will spend a year traveling the nation to represent educators and advocate on behalf of teachers. Hayes looks forward to sharing her belief in the importance of service-learning, and in making the teaching profession more attractive and appealing to young people across all demographics.

Hayes and the other 55 State Teachers of the Year have been invited to an event Tuesday at the White House, where they will be honored by President Barack Obama.

Learn more about Jahana Hayes, including photos and a bio, at <http://www.ccsso.org/ntoy.html>.

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