

JUST FOR TEACHERS UPDATES



Meet the Finalists!

May 9, 2018

Florida Educators,

We are proud to present your [2019 Florida Teacher of the Year finalists](#)! This week, Education Commissioner Pam Stewart surprised the following five educators in their classrooms with \$15,000 checks and the news that they Teacher of the Year finalists.



JOY PRESCOTT

Joy Prescott is a 4th grade mathematics teacher at Pemayetv Emahakv Charter School in Glades County with 17 years of experience as a Florida educator. She is also the lead 4th grade teacher, which enables her to meet regularly with school leadership and her colleagues to discuss strategies that have been successful, as well as ways they can work collaboratively to improve every student's educational experience. Prescott has been commended for her dynamic teaching style; her ability to engage students through "out-of-the-box" activities; and her impeccable work ethic. Prescott mentors new teachers, spends time after school tutoring struggling students and serves on committees that contribute to the overall school culture.

PATRICK FARLEY

Patrick Farley is the 3rd and 4th grade gifted teacher at Crystal Lakes Elementary School in Martin County, where he has taught a variety of grade levels since 2013. Martin County School District Superintendent Laurie Gaylord applauded him for his role in the school improving its school grade from a “C” to an “A” last year, noting his well-documented success and designation as a High Impact Teacher. His involvement in the school community extends far beyond the classroom. Farley has chaired the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support committee and coaches the school’s track team, running and cubing clubs and the robotics team.

MOLLY WINTERS DIALLO

Molly Winters Diallo began teaching at Alonzo and Tracy Mourning Senior High School in Miami-Dade County in 2009, the year it was founded. She serves as the Social Sciences Department Chair and teaches Honors U.S. History, Advanced Placement (AP) Psychology and AP Human Geography. Since the inception of the U.S. History end-of-course assessment, her students’ pass rate has averaged 90 percent, with last year’s rate being 98 percent. In each of the other courses, her students’ pass rate has exceeded the global mean pass rate, and her students have made significant individual gains. As a department chair and an instructional leader, Diallo mentors new teachers and collaborates with fellow faculty members to improve students’ learning experiences.

SAMANTHA NEFF

Samantha Neff is a 17-year veteran educator serving as an instructional coach at Idyllwilde Elementary School, a turnaround school in Seminole County, where she requested to be placed last year. At Idyllwilde, she implemented data-driven and solution-oriented professional learning communities to help her colleagues enhance their instruction. Outside of the classroom, she has taken the initiative to plan family nights; formed a hospitality committee focused on enhancing and maintaining staff morale; and taken on leadership roles within the school. Neff also serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Central Florida’s College of Education and is a featured writer for the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics’ online publication, *Teaching Children Mathematics*.

KYLE DENCKER

Kyle Dencker began working at Timber Creek High School in Orange County in 2009, where he has taught more than 20 different courses and made it his mission to increase participation of underrepresented subgroups in computer science classes. As the Career and Technical Education Department Lead, he has played a critical role in developing and expanding computer science courses at Timber Creek High School, where the computer science program has grown to include more than 380 students. In 2013 and 2017, he received the National Center of Women and Informational Technology Educator Award for his work in inspiring female students to take STEM courses. Outside of the classroom, Dencker trains other educators across the country on how they can impact their students’ lives through the world of computer science.

The finalists were selected from 74 district-nominated teachers through a rigorous selection process including several selection panels, a classroom video submission, and writing samples. The finalists will travel to Tallahassee in June for the next step of the process. The 2019 Teacher of the Year will be announced during the annual Florida Teacher of the Year [gala](#) in Orlando at the Omni ChampionsGate July 13. Each District Teacher of the Year will receive \$10,000; the five finalists will receive \$15,000; and the 2019 Florida Teacher of the Year will receive a total of \$20,000.

Learn more about the [Florida Teacher of the Year Program](#).

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#FLteachersLead

Teacher Appreciation Week

Thank you for being a Florida educator! We appreciate the effort, time, heart and skill you put into your classroom and students every day! There are so many ways to thank a teacher, and I hope you are thanked many times this week and every week. My personal favorite from the Rouse High School Student Council is *Wednesday: Dress Up Like A Teacher*.

