

# State Education Department Announces Maine-Endwell High School Teacher Named 2020 Teacher of the Year

## **Dedicated Teacher Has Improved the Lives of Students by Being Actively Involved and Creating a District Food Pantry**

The Board of Regents today named **Rachel Murat of Maine-Endwell High School** in Endwell, NY the 2020 New York State Teacher of the Year and awarded the 2019 Marge A. Tierney Memorial Scholarship to Robert E. Parsons, a graduate student at Western Michigan University, the State Education Department announced today.

## 2020 Teacher of the Year

Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa and Interim State Education Commissioner Beth Berlin presented Murat, a high school social studies and technology integration teacher at Maine-Endwell High School, with a certificate of recognition. Murat, who was also a finalist for 2019 New York State Teacher of the Year award, was presented with the Thomas Sobol Award and the David Johnson Award, both created as annual gifts for recipients of the Teacher of the Year award.

“Rachel Murat fosters a sense of independence in her students, consistently and creatively engaging students in high level work,” Chancellor Rosa said. “She serves as an advisor to numerous academic clubs and encourages her students to work together to solve complex problems. I know she will be an incredible ambassador as Teacher of the Year.”

“Rachel Murat goes beyond her teaching duties to engage students and staff outside the classroom, helping to meet the needs of local community members,” Interim Commissioner Berlin said. “Through her work founding a nonprofit pantry system, she is providing resources that feed more than 100 district families and battling hunger in her community. Ms. Murat embodies the qualities of a true leader, and I’m proud to honor her as our Teacher of the Year.”

“As a longtime colleague and friend of Mrs. Murat, I have repeatedly witnessed the significant and positive impact she has had on individual students and the Maine-Endwell Community as a whole,” said Thomas Burkhardt Principal at Maine-Endwell Senior High School. “Her success in education is evidenced by not only her ability to inspire, it is the volume of young adults who have gone on to do inspirational things as a result of her mentoring. She approaches each school year and school day as a new learning opportunity with students as her partners. Mrs. Murat is not only an inspiration to educators, she also sends a message to all adults who might feel discouraged by trends in our society and our ability to get through to young adults that, ‘Yes we can!’ The Maine-Endwell Senior High School could not be prouder of Rachel Murat’s recognition at the state and national level with this prestigious award.”

“A New York State education is highly valued and respected across our nation,” said Maine-Endwell Central School District Superintendent Jason Van Fossen. “The Maine-Endwell Central School District takes tremendous pride in having one of our teachers, Mrs. Rachel Murat, as the New York State Teacher of the Year. Rachel focuses on learning for all and empowers students to find and share their voice as individuals. She models respectful behavior, encourages academic risk-taking, and inspires students to be community-minded servants. Being the New York State Teacher of the Year is a highly prestigious, incredible honor and Rachel Murat is a model ambassador.”

“Dedication to one’s craft is essential in any career field, but Rachel exemplifies the dedication that our educators have for both their careers and the people they serve: New York’s children,” NYSUT President Andy Pallotta said. “Whether it’s teaching students thoughtful digital citizenship or helping families dealing with food insecurity, Rachel is a shining example of how we all should seek to impact our communities to build a better New York and world.”

Murat, the 50<sup>th</sup> New York State Teacher of the Year, has been teaching for 24 years. Throughout her tenure, she has instructed countless courses including Global and U.S. History, AP Government and Politics, Digital Citizenship, Entrepreneurship, and Economics.

She earned her bachelor’s degree at Ohio University and her master’s degree at Binghamton University, SUNY.

In the coming year, Murat will serve as an ambassador for teachers throughout the state and will be the New York State nominee for the National Teacher of the Year.

Finalists for 2020 New York State Teacher of the Year are as follows:

- **Mary Howard**, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher from the Veronica E. Connor Middle School, Grand Island Central School District;
- **John Braun**, a science teacher at East Northport Middle School, Northport-East Northport School District;
- **Jeanne Lance**, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Watervliet Elementary School, Watervliet City School District; and
- **Laura Macy**, a Culinary Arts teacher at Steinmetz Career and Leadership Academy, Schenectady City Schools.

The New York State Teacher of the Year Program is administered by the New York State Education Department and sponsored by New York State United Teachers (NYSUT); United Federation of Teachers (UFT); New York State Parents and Teachers Association (NYSPTA); New York State Association for School Curriculum Development (NYSASCD) New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA); School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS); New York State Association of Teacher Educators (NYSATE); New York Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (NYACTE); and Voya Financial. The program is run in conjunction with the National Teacher of the Year Program, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

Additional information about the New York State Teacher of the Year Program is available in the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at the New York State Education Department at (518) 474-5922 or on the [Teacher of the Year website](#).