

2022 PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHING

Meet the Finalists - Mathematics

Kristin Hanley, Clarkstown Central School District

Kristin Hanley provides mathematics instruction as Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention services to elementary students, grades K-5, at Lakewood Elementary School. Kristin also serves her district as an elementary curriculum specialist focusing on curriculum and professional development. Kristin has 22 years of experience and has been in her current position at Clarkstown Central School District for six years. In preparation for her teaching career, Kristin earned a Master of Science in Elementary Education from the Graduate School of Education at Fordham University and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Fordham University. Kristin holds New York State Permanent Certification, Pre-K – 6.

Kristin thoroughly understands how to guide her students in their journey of conceptual understanding by incorporating modeling strategies into her instruction and providing connections to future learning. Kristin uses learning approaches supported by current research. She is very thoughtful when working with diverse learners and adapts her instruction in many ways to meet their needs. She considers diversity through a multi-faceted lens, including socio-economic disposition as well as English language learners. To motivate students, Kristin uses “the power of play” to keep them engaged and challenges her students to make and test predictions. Kristin has a performance-based approach to assessment and makes adaptations to address individual student needs. Outside of the classroom, Kristin collaborates with Mercy College Center for STEM on a NYS Smart STEM grant. Kristin demonstrates strong leadership both in and outside of the classroom and strives to promote educational equity. In addition, Kristin is highly involved with reducing the over-identification of English language learner students as requiring math support.

Justin Wiedrick, Adirondack Central School District

Justin Wiedrick teaches mathematics and technology at Adirondack Middle School to 6th grade students. Justin has been teaching for 21 years and has been in his current position at Adirondack Central School District for nine years. To expose students to STEAM concepts, Justin created a class that incorporates block coding to navigate drones and robots through challenges in a collaborative setting. This class dives deeper into the concept of coding while incorporating the concepts of science, technology, engineering, art, and math, as well as collaboratively developing problem solving strategies in a real-world manner. Prior to starting his teaching career, Justin earned both of his degrees at the State University of New York at Oswego: A Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Pre-K – 9 with a Mathematics Concentration, followed by a Master of Science in Literacy, N – 5. Justin holds three New York State

Teaching Certifications: Elementary Education Pre-K – 9, Mathematics grades 7-12, and Literacy grades N – 5.

By the wide range of instructional methods used to support students' understanding of mathematical concepts and their real-life applications, Justin demonstrates a depth of knowledge. Justin utilizes a flipped classroom and differentiation instructional techniques, including creating physical models to assist students with making connections and questioning techniques that anticipate student misconceptions. To motivate students, Justin creates classroom lessons that are experimental and interactive, allowing students to discover and learn by doing. Students within Justin's class independently seek out tools that have been strategically placed within reach to confirm or assist their task completion. Justin utilizes a comprehensive assessment plan, including formative assessment, question-and-answer dialogue with students to assess prerequisite skills, and providing formal constructive feedback for students to submit accurate written work. Justin has a growth mindset and is committed to student learning. As a National Board Certified Teacher and a New York State Master Teacher, Justin exemplifies leadership in education inside and outside of the classroom and consistently seeks out new learning opportunities to improve his teaching.

Meet the Finalists – Science

Ms. Michelle Jennings, New York City Department of Education, Community School District 18

Michelle Jennings teaches science, engineering, and computer science to 6th grade students at Brooklyn Science and Engineering Academy. Michelle also provides academic support for literacy and science and goes above and beyond by teaching remotely on Saturday mornings. Teaching for 14 years, Michelle has taught in her current position for the last eight years. Before starting her career, Michelle earned several degrees, including a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from St. John's University, a Master of Science in Public Health Administration from Central Michigan University, and a Master of Science in Education from Long Island University. Michelle holds two professional New York State Teaching Certifications: Students with Disabilities, grades 5-9, and Generalist in Middle Childhood Education, grades 5-9.

Michelle utilizes the concepts of Universal Design for Learning in her classroom by using many instructional strategies to meet the needs of her diverse students. Socratic seminars, which encourage critical thinking and engage students in reflective discussions where evidence is used to support a claim, are utilized within Michelle's classroom lessons. Students think deeply about what questions to ask, learn to take risks, understand they can learn through mistakes, and ask for help. Michelle also uses assessment and strategic feedback in helping students become successful in reaching the learning goal or completing the task. Students are given the opportunity to use feedback from the teacher and from peers to revise assignments and to improve their work. Michelle helps her students to assess their own work using rubrics she provides to the class. Michelle addresses educational equity within her school and community by creating a culture of respect that includes equity, fairness, high expectations, risk-taking, and building a community using restorative circles. Finally, Michelle gives back by mentoring other teachers and leading professional development sessions within her district. Michelle's strong knowledge and experience with teaching in an urban setting benefits educators across the state and nationwide.

Ms. Shiela Lee, New York City Department of Education, Community School District 2

Shiela Lee teaches mathematics, science, engineering, technology, and computer science. Shiela has been teaching for a total of eleven years; ten years for NYC DOE and one year on a Fulbright Fellowship in Taiwan. Within the ten years of teaching for NYC DOE, Shiela taught second grade for eight years, integrating computer science into the curriculum. Currently, Shiela is a STEM cluster teacher for grades PreK-5 at PS 59, Beekman Hill International School, and has been for two years. Shiela earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Grinnell College and a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction from the Teachers College at Columbia University. Shiela holds NYS

Teaching Certifications in Students with Disabilities, Grades 1-6 and Childhood Education, Grades 1-6.

Shiela shows a deep understanding of science concepts by making complex ideas accessible and engaging to the grade level taught. Supporting students as they strengthen their understanding by connecting prior knowledge with current concepts, Shiela shows students how current science concepts will progress and expand in middle and high school. Shiela incorporates multiple instructional strategies in her lessons, including questioning techniques to facilitate learning, creative art activities embedded in the science lesson, and low floor/high ceiling tasks. Shiela also incorporates American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with her students nonverbally. Using reflective group work as an instructional strategy and as a form of assessment, Shiela builds strong engagement and collaboration that enables students to become more thoughtful and intentional with their decision-making. Shiela understands the importance of students developing their own identities and how this is incorporated when designing her classroom lessons. She highlights the lives and successes of underrepresented scientists and STEM figures and the challenges they had to overcome. Finally, Shiela is a leader in and outside of her classroom. She provides leadership that facilitates change in communities, moving them towards progress. Shiela is also active in the Computer Science Teachers Association, participates in panel discussions pertaining to STEM in NYS, and has published literature in the award-winning, peer-reviewed practitioner journal for elementary-level science teachers "Science and Children."