

PRESS RELEASE

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ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR JESSICA PICCIUTO ON BEING NAMED 2015-2016 “ESSEX COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR”



Jessica Picciuto fourth grade teacher from Oak View School in Bloomfield was honored as the 2015-2016 “Essex County Teacher of the Year” during the Freeholder Board’s October 28th meeting at the Hall of Records. Jessica Picciuto (Front, 2nd from left), is pictured above with: Front Row (left to right), Freeholder Patricia Sebold, Freeholder Cynthia Toro and Freeholder President Britnee Timberlake. Back Row (left to right), Freeholder Leonard Luciano and Freeholder Wayne Richardson. PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

(Newark, NJ) – The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored Bloomfield teacher Jessica Picciuto for being named the 2015-2016 “Essex County Teacher of the Year” during its Wednesday, October 28, 2015, meeting held at the Hall of Records. Freeholder Patricia Sebold of Livingston sponsored and presented the Commendation along with Freeholder Cynthia Toro and Freeholder President Britnee Timberlake.

In her opening statement, Freeholder Sebold noted the honor of making the presentation as “personal” because as a retired West Orange High School English Teacher with 30 years of experience and service, “I understand what it takes to be an effective teacher.” she said. She further noted, in the years to come, Jessica Picciuto’s students will affirm her effectiveness when she sees them in the community later in life as young adults; they will tell her the impact she made on their lives.

Also, sharing in the presentation, District 5 Freeholder Cynthia Toro of Bloomfield thanked Freeholder Sebold for sponsoring the commendation and gave kudos to Ms. Picciuto for being selected as the 2015-2016 “Essex County Teacher of the Year”. She noted that teachers have a very special job; she called them, “Encouragers of the world,” because they teach skills that directly influence our youth, ultimately leading to their careers, personal lives and success. As a resident of Bloomfield, with two children of her own attending public school in the district, Freeholder Toro

knows first-hand the phenomenal teachers in the Bloomfield district, as well as the quality education experience at Oak View School where Jessica Picciuto teaches. Additionally, Oak View School has the distinction of being named a Blue Ribbon School. Blue Ribbon schools are recognized nationally for achieving superior standards of academic excellence. Freeholder Toro further acknowledged two Essex County Vocational Schools (Essex County Bloomfield Vocational Technical High School and Newark Vocational Technical High School) who also received National Blue Ribbon designation this year as well.

Ms. Picciuto was chosen by the New Jersey Department of Education as a finalist for 2015-2016 National Teacher of the Year, this program began in 1952 and continues as the oldest, most prestigious national honors program which focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. As one of twenty-one finalists being recognized for their valuable contributions to their school communities Jessica Picciuto will be given the opportunity to serve as an ambassador of education to officials at the state level. As an ambassador, the New Jersey Department of Education will foster opportunities for teachers to network with educators throughout the state and country and assist them in bringing valuable resources and materials directly from the Department of Education to the local districts. Ms. Picciuto will then go on to compete for New Jersey State Teacher of the Year, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers, which will name the nation’s top teacher in April, 2016.

A fourth-grade teacher at Oak View Elementary School, in Bloomfield, New Jersey, she received a rousing Bengal standing ovation from her fellow teachers, parents and students who all acknowledge Ms. Picciuto to be an excellent role model for her students as she always encourages them to work hard, have fun and try their best. She graduated from Monmouth University with a degree in elementary education before earning her Master’s Degree in reading and is a certified reading specialist and is currently pursuing a second Master’s Degree in education leadership.

In her acceptance of the commendation, Ms. Picciuto thanked the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders for the recognition. She considers herself “very lucky” to be a teacher and to be able to educate students and make a difference in their lives. “I strive to make learning fun and my classroom a place where students succeed.” she said. She further stated she credits her success to the winning combination of; support from her fellow teachers, guidance from the Bloomfield School District and a strong work ethic instilled by her parents. She closed by saying, “I am truly honored to represent all of the hardworking and dedicated Essex County teachers. I look forward to the year ahead as the Essex County Teacher of the Year and the impact that I can make in education.”

The presentation was also attended by Freeholder Leonard Luciano of West Caldwell and Freeholder Wayne Richardson from Newark.

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