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Office of Communications / (518) 474-1201

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For More Information Contact:
Jane Briggs or Jonathan Burman at (518) 474-1201
Internet: <http://www.nysed.gov>

HORSEHEADS HIGH SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER NAMED 2009 NEW YORK STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Vickie Mike, a high school foreign language teacher at Horseheads High School in Horseheads, NY was chosen as the 2009 New York State Teacher of the Year. Commissioner Richard P. Mills made the announcement at the September meeting of the New York State Board of Regents. A reception and ceremony honoring Mrs. Mike and the four finalists will be held on October 20, 2008 at the State Education Building in Albany, NY during the October meeting of the New York State Board of Regents.

Mrs. Mike is the 39th New York State Teacher of the Year and the first from the Horseheads district where she has taught for twenty seven years. She has served as the Horseheads Department Chairperson for Languages Other Than English for the last sixteen years and was invited to participate in a Symposium of World Language Educators in China in October of 2007. Her principal of the last three years, James Abrams, describes her as embodying life long learning. "Mrs. Mike is always searching for a more engaging lesson, a new way to use technology in the classroom to enhance student learning, a better way to share ideas with colleagues and the best way to make a difference in the lives of her students."

Horseheads colleague, Mary Ann Schmitt, describes Vickie as representing "everything that is good about education and teaching, and [she] is truly a role model for all. Vickie is passionate about her profession, and she is intuitive, proactive and approachable. She works cooperatively with others, creating synergy through the individual strengths and contributions of the people with whom she works. Vickie has a strong work ethic and works tirelessly for her students, her colleagues and her school community." Her commitment to her students, school and community is evident in all of her work, particularly her travel abroad with students and parents. She is dedicated to connecting her school community to the larger global community and encouraging her students to become citizens of the world.

Finalists were: Maribel Pregnall, a science teacher at Arlington High School in Lagrangeville, NY; Joan D'Urso, an elementary inclusion teacher at Medford Elementary School in Patchogue, NY; Deborah Dahlin, an art teacher at Elmcrest Elementary School in

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Liverpool, NY; and Richard Lemke III, a science teacher at Sachem High School East in Farmingville, NY.

The State Teacher of the Year Program is sponsored by NYSUT (New York State United Teachers, New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers (NYSPTA), the New York State Association for School Curriculum Development (NYSASCD), ING Financial Services Inc., the SMARTer Kids Foundation, SMART Technologies, and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The program is run in conjunction with the National Teacher of the Year Program, sponsored by CCSSO.

The process of choosing the Teacher of the Year is rigorous. All applicant portfolios are read and scored by two outside readers, the scores are averaged and the teachers with the top ten scores become the semi-finalists. The semi-finalists' portfolios are sent to a different committee to be read and scored. The scores are averaged, and the top five become the finalists. Education Department staff interview representatives from each of the finalists' schools and speak with colleagues, administrators, students, parents and community members. The finalists come to Albany for an interview with the Selection Committee, whose members are representatives from the New York State United Teachers, the New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, the New York Association for School Curriculum Development, the School Administrators Association of New York, the New York State School Boards Association, the New York State Association of Teacher Educators, the New York Association of Colleges of Teacher Education and United Federation of Teachers. The sitting Teacher of the Year also serves on the committee whose chairperson is the previous year's Teacher of the Year. After the interview, the committee considers all application components and votes to choose the State Teacher of the Year.

Applications for the Teacher of the Year Program are available in the fall of each year from the Teacher Development Programs Unit of the New York State Education Department at (518) 486-6042 or online: <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/TEACHING/toty/totyindex.htm> Individuals identified to the Education Department as outstanding teachers are also mailed applications.