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2017 Virginia Teacher of the Year Announced Tonight

RICHMOND, Va. — Secretary of Education Dietra Y. Trent and Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples will announce the selection of the 2017 Virginia Teacher of the Year this evening at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. The announcement will be made at the conclusion of a 6:30-8:30 p.m. recognition ceremony in the museum's Marble Hall. The ceremony will be preceded by a 5:30 p.m. reception.

The eight regional winners in the running for 2017 Virginia Teacher of the Year are as follows:

- Louise Thornton, a government teacher at Prince George High in Prince George County (Region 1)
- Toney McNair Jr., a music teacher at Indian River Middle in Chesapeake (Region 2)
- Carolyn Kleinert, a Spanish teacher at Freedom Middle in Spotsylvania County (Region 3)
- Heidi Trude, a French teacher at Skyline High in Warren County (Region 4)
- Crystal DeLong, a social studies teacher at Liberty High in Bedford County (Region 5)
- Jason Ince, an agricultural education teacher at Chatham High in Pittsylvania County (Region 6)
- Beth Shell, an agricultural education teacher at Lee County Career and Technical Center in Lee County (Region 7)
- Katie McCann, a language arts and reading teacher at Appomattox Elementary in Appomattox County (Region 8)

A Virginia Department of Education-selected committee will interview each of the regional winners today and make its selection for the 2017 Virginia Teacher of the Year. The committee includes representatives of professional and educational associations, representatives of the business community, and 2016 Virginia Teacher of the Year Natalie DiFusco-Funk of Salem.

The 2017 Virginia Teacher of the Year will be the commonwealth's nominee in the National Teacher of the Year Program. The recognition is given by the Council of Chief State School Officers, in partnership with Voya Financial. Two previous Virginia teachers — B. Philip Bigler, the 1998 Virginia Teacher of the Year, and Mary V. Bicouvaris, the 1989 Virginia Teacher of the Year — went on to be named as a National Teacher of the Year.

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