

School Psychologist of the Year 2003

In 1991 the OSPA Executive Board voted to establish the School Psychologist of the Year Award – an award that would honor a member of OSPA for current excellence in service delivery. It was required, therefore, that at least seventy-five percent of the candidate's time be spent providing school psychological services to students, teachers, and parents, typically in a school setting. The OSPA regional associations submit the nominations for this award and the selection committee is composed of the officers of OSPA, the elected regional representatives, and the Awards Committee members. The person chosen for this award becomes OSPA's nominee for the NASP School Psychologist of the Year Award. The names of past recipients of this award are posted on the OSPA website. My introductory remarks for each of this year's nominees will also be posted there.

This year four regions have chosen to nominate one of their members for this award. OSPA believes it is an honor to be nominated by a region and would like to take a few minutes to recognize each of the nominees. After each introduction would the nominee please come forward to accept a certificate from OSPA President George Csanyi.

The nominee of the Cleveland Association of School Psychologists is Susan Berk. She is employed by the Cleveland Municipal School District. Mrs. Berk was nominated by her region because of her dedication and hardwork in working towards her goal to make a difference in the lives of the children she encounters each day. She is described as a knowledgeable veteran and one of the most dedicated people in the field. She routinely mentors new psychologists and takes a lead role with many departmental groups in the school district. Mrs. Berk has demonstrated the ability to establish rapport with some of the most difficult students, parents, and co-workers. She is self-motivated, organized, and works at a very high rate of efficiency and energy. Please join OSPA in recognizing Mrs. Susan Berk for her efforts on behalf of children and families.

The nominee of the Kent-Akron Association of School Psychologists is **Patrick McGown**. He is employed by Akron Public Schools.

Mr. McGown was nominated because of the contributions he has made in the development of programs for at-risk youth and in creating systems change at the school district and community levels. He established the Pupil Adjustment Program and alternative school programs such as the Phoenix Program, Saturn School, Overage High School, School Within A School, 9th Grade Recovery, and the 8th Grade Initiative. He is the primary respondent to student threats of violence in the district. He presents training programs for staff and supervises interns. He has served the community through service to the YMCA and Child Guidance Centers. He is noted for his enthusiasm, innovativeness, and genuine concern for the most difficult students. Please join with OSPA in acknowledging the achievements of Patrick McGown.

The nominee of the North West Ohio School Psychologists Association is Teresa Gantz. She is employed by the Lima City Schools. Ms. Gantz was nominated because of her efforts in implementing and improving the IAT process in her district and implementing effective data collection strategies. She has chaired the district's Self Improvement Review team. Ms. Gantz was a leader in developing the necessary policies and procedures for the IAT process, coordinating the necessary in-services. She has the personal skills to build positive, professional relationships with colleagues, recognizing that they are instrumental in enhancing the educational experiences of students. She is regarded as an educational leader who is knowledgeable, motivated, compassionate and enthusiastic. OSPA is pleased to recognize Teresa Gantz for her accomplishments and commitment to excellence in our profession.

The nominee of the School Psychologists of Central Ohio association is Bonnie Eckert. She is employed by the Reynoldsburg City Schools. Ms. Eckert was nominated because of the high regard with which she is viewed by her colleagues. Her technical skills and thoroughness in assessment and report writing reflect best practices and the demands of current research. She is particularly dedicated to serving the mental health needs of the children in her building. Yes, I said “building” – her skills are so valued that the principal of one of the elementary schools in her district uses monies from his principal’s fund to have her hired full time in that one building. The principal notes her positive attitude, dedication, and expertise. Please join with OSPA in recognizing the professionalism in service to children of Bonnie Eckert.

These four individuals demonstrate the diversity of skills and the commitment to service that are the hallmark of our profession. Their energy and dedication call upon each of us to take advantage of the opportunities to serve children that are presented to us everyday.

The selection committee was faced with the very difficult task of choosing one of these individuals as this year’s award recipient. It is with pride that OSPA presents the School Psychologist of the Year Award for 2003 to Patrick McGown.