

---

## 2009 Presidential Award Winner Recognition

---

### The Background:

Each year the president names more than one hundred science and math teachers as recipients of the prestigious *Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching*. These educators receive their awards during a White House ceremony given in their honor. This year's recognition event for 2009 awardees took place during the week of December 13-17, 2010.

The *Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching* are awarded annually to the best science and math teachers from across the country. Winners are selected by a panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, and educators following an initial selection process done at the state level. Each year the award alternates, going either to science and math teachers in grades K through 6 or to those teaching in grades 7 through 12 (as it was in this year).

Winners of the award receive \$10,000 awards from the National Science Foundation to be used at their discretion. They also receive an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the awards ceremony and several days of educational and celebratory events, including meeting the president, and visiting with members of Congress and science agency leaders.

**Peggy Bertrand** has been teaching at Oak Ridge High School for 11 years. She is primarily a Physics teacher but has taught Environmental Science and mathematics classes as well.

Peggy runs a large Advanced Placement (AP) Physics program and teaches both trigonometry- and calculus-based AP Physics. It is important to her that students apply physics thinking to the broader world. Her recent article in the *Science Teacher* describes teaching fluid mechanics in the context of Hurricane Katrina. In fall 2009, she and her students were awarded a Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam grant to design and build a microscale hydroelectric generator that powers a small surface water purification system to produce potable water. They will demonstrate their invention at MIT's EurekaFest in June 2010.

Serving as an AP Physics reader and a consultant to the College Board has provided Peggy with the opportunity to meet other Physics teachers from around the country. She leads several workshops and summer institutes annually.

Peggy has a B.S. in Chemistry from Southeastern Louisiana University and a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Florida State University. She had careers in chemical research and entrepreneurial software prior to receiving a teaching certificate from the University of Tennessee.

**Jeffrey McCalla** currently teaches Algebra II to 10th graders at St. Mary's Episcopal School. For the previous 7 years, he taught various levels of mathematics at Bolton High School in Arlington, TN. When algebra test scores dropped, the administration turned to him for help. He was asked to teach gateway algebra classes to the lowest-performing students. During a 4-year period, 100 percent of his students passed the State-mandated exam (and 70 percent passed at the advanced level).

Jeffrey incorporates the use of technology to make mathematics more relevant and engaging for his students. As a regional instructor for Texas Instruments, Jeffrey has presented sessions at conferences all over the country. He was on the authoring team (writing TI-Nspire documents) for the 2011 edition of the Pearson Algebra II textbook.

Jeffrey has a B.A. in Christian Education with a minor in Mathematics from Wheaton College and a Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of Memphis. He is a recipient of the David Pickler Distinguished Technology Educator Award, and he is a certified secondary education teacher with an endorsement in mathematics.

**The Master Plan Connection:**

This agenda item supports the Board's *Master Plan* by recognizing quality teaching. This item officially acknowledges Mr. McCalla and Ms Bertrand's accomplishment of winning the 2009 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching by presenting them with a certificate of recognition.

**The Recommendation:**

For informational purposes only; no action required.