



**STATE OF VERMONT
Vermont Department of Education
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Leland & Gray Union High School Teacher Named 2012 Teacher of the Year

MONTPELIER – Tong Chen, a middle and high school Chinese teacher at Leland & Gray Union High School in Townsend, was named by Commissioner Armando Vilaseca as the 2012 Vermont Teacher of the Year at a ceremony held today at the school.

Also honored were:

- Alternate **Jeff Johnson**, a physical education teacher at Mt. Anthony Union Middle and High School in Bennington.
- Finalists **Mark Weikert**, a physical education teacher at Flood Brook Union School in Londonderry; and **Glenda Allen**, a literacy and math teacher at Barre Town Elementary School in Barre Town.

As the 2012 Teacher of the Year, Chen will travel statewide visiting schools and working with teachers. In addition, she is Vermont's candidate for the National Teacher of the Year award, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers. She will also travel to Washington, D.C. this spring for a reception at the White House, where she will meet the president.

The assembly included remarks by Chen, Education Commissioner Armando Vilaseca and Principal Dr. Dorinne Dorfman. The student body and faculty were present as well. Chen was presented with SMART Board™ equipment and software for her classroom by Brian Schofield of SMART Technologies, with software and materials going to each of the other three finalists.

Chen, a resident of Bennington, has taught Chinese language and culture at Leland & Gray for over six years. She is the only authorized AP Chinese teacher in Vermont, and has written three textbooks for her students and other Vermont students to use. She is actively involved in the Journey East Art and Culture Exchange Program, The Governor's Institute on Asian Culture, University of Vermont's Asian Studies Outreach Program, and Vermont's Virtual High School, offering Mandarin Chinese to other Vermont students. She also acts as a translator for Chinese immigrants across New England. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in Educational Leadership.

She credits her parents, who were visiting from China and attended Tuesday's event, with inspiring her to pursue her education.

"My teaching style is a combination of a Chinese and an American approach, strict and free," she wrote in her application. "My teaching sets high expectations and passes the message to the students that learning is a serious matter, but it can be fun and inspiring... The rewards that I find in teaching are when students become passionate about learning the Chinese language and

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culture, become passionate about understanding the world, and to prepare them to be world citizens.”

“Ms. Chen exemplifies the professional standards for Vermont educators,” said Superintendent Steven John, Ed. D., in recommending her. “Her learning is without compare when one considers her mastery of two languages and cultures. What sets Tong Chen apart from other bilingual teachers is her effective use of professional knowledge to ensure that all students successfully speak and write Chinese. For Tong Chen, all truly means all. She will see every student succeed, no matter what it takes.”

“Her instructional style combines impeccable preparation, clear, high expectations, frequent and immediate formative assessment, and joyful wit,” said Dr. Dorfman. “There is no misbehavior in her classes since students find themselves engaged in the fascinating visual and auditory world of Chinese under the close, caring supervision of their teacher.”

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