

Pair of Macomb educators are Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching finalists

UCS, Chippewa Valley instructors make the list

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Bryan Battaglia, a teacher at Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies and finalist in the Presidential Teachers Awards, works with ninth-graders on a physics problem. (Photo courtesy of Utica Community Schools)

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A pair of Macomb County educators have been recognized as among the tops in the state.

The county has two teachers who were named to the list of six finalists for the national 2023 [Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching \(PAEMST\)](#), the Michigan Department of Education announced.

They are Bryan Battaglia, a physics teacher for Utica Community Schools' Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies, and Diane Cerabone, a math teacher for Chippewa Valley Schools' Dakota High School.

"I'm excited for the validation from a group of my peers. I have received good feedback from my students and parents, but the feedback from my evaluators was excellent," said Battaglia, noting the best part of his job is working with kids.

All of the educators chosen to be finalists work primarily with students in grades 7-12.

"It is awesome to help them discover things about themselves that they never knew. I love getting a chance to help my students fall in love with science," Battaglia said.

Cerabone is delighted to represent Chippewa Valley Schools, and specifically Dakota's Ninth Grade Center, as a state finalist for the PAEMST.

"This recognition is not only for me but also for my colleagues who inspire me to put students first, to try new things, and to continuously improve," Cerabone said.

The other four Michian finalists include:

- Steven Koponen, Warner Middle School, Farmington Public Schools, mathematics
- Scott Milam, Plymouth High School, Plymouth-Canton Community Schools, science
- Leigh Roehm, Saline Middle School, Saline Area Schools, science
- Karen Sleno, Flushing High School, Flushing Community Schools, mathematics

“Michigan and its students are fortunate to have so many dedicated and talented teachers throughout the state,” said State Superintendent Dr. Michael F. Rice. “We salute these six strong state finalists and wish them the best of luck at the national level this year.”

The PAEMST program is administered by the National Science Foundation (NSF) on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

A national committee of prominent mathematicians, scientists, mathematics/science education researchers, district level personnel, and classroom teachers recommend up to 108 teachers to receive PAEMST awards each year.



Diane Cerabone

Up to two teachers—mathematics or science—from each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. territories as a group (comprising American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and schools operated in the United States and overseas by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) receive the award.

All of the teachers who are selected as PAEMST awardees receive a trip to Washington, D.C., where they attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities. They also receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation along with a presidential certificate and the honor of joining an elite cohort of award-winning teachers who support and promote state/jurisdiction and national science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) teaching.

“If I do win at the national level, it will be because Chippewa Valley is a place where teachers put students first and continuously improve to provide the best possible education for the families in our district,” Cerabone said.

For more information, visit the [PAEMST website](#).

