



Dear Academy of Finance Community:

The Governor's Educator of the Year Program highlights educational innovation, student achievement, exemplary teaching, and important services outside the classroom environment that lead to student success. This celebratory program recognizes our state's best teachers and educational services professionals who will be recognized at the Union County Office of Education.

We are proud to announce the 2017 Governor's Teacher of the Year for Academy of Finance was awarded to Mr. Gennaro DeFrancesco. A social studies teacher in Elizabeth since 2006, "Mr. D" is an incredibly committed educator and should be commended for the lengths he goes to make sure kids learn in his classroom in authentic and relevant ways. He beautifully marries the human experience with academic learning; which might be why staff and students alike look to him for guidance and support, academic and otherwise.

This year's Educational Service Provider of the Year for Academy of Finance was awarded to Mrs. Safiyyah Howell. A guidance counselor since 2012, and for the last two years with AOF, Mrs. Howell is an advocate for students in their academic, social, and professional endeavors. She truly has a pulse on the building and works with all school and community members to ensure exceptional services are provided for her students. Mrs. Howell is to be commended for reaching out to the community to connect the students with the right kind of additional support, intervention, and social emotional learning opportunities that students and their families need.

Please join us in celebrating these two amazing professionals for the work they have done, and continue to do, for our school community and district.

With Celebration,

Dr. Megan Marx