

Tech school teacher is state's top educator

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EXETER — Administrators, teachers and students gathered at the Seacoast School of Technology auditorium to honor Carolyn Kelley, this year's New Hampshire Teacher of the Year.

Kelley, a biotechnology teacher, is the first career and technology educator to be recognized for the honor.

"Carolyn has led this school into the 21st century and represents what a career and technology teacher should be," said Seacoast School of Technology Principal Nancy Pierce.

After months of presentations and interviews, Kelley was one of eight finalists for the award.

"I'm a little overwhelmed," Kelley said, adding that "there were so many deserving teachers. I'm glad to represent them."

Although Kelley said she was surprised by the honor, her students said they felt confident she would win when she was nominated last year.

"She's so involved in everything we do," said student Caitlin Schena.

"We're so proud," said student Alex Robles.

For Kelley, teaching has always been about the students.

"You want them to learn the skills they are going to use in higher education. Treat them as adults and have faith in their abilities," she said.

This year, Hannaford Supermarkets sponsored Teacher of the Year and will give Kelley a grant for professional development this fall.

As New Hampshire Teacher of the Year, Kelley will travel around the state and country to speak at schools and attend conferences. She will also be entered as a nominee for National Teacher of the Year.

"We're so pleased for Carolyn. She really represents what vocational standards are today," School Administrative Unit 16 Superintendent Arthur Hanson said.

N.H. Education Commissioner Lyonel Tracy said he is impressed with SST and believes the choice of Kelley as N.H. Teacher of the Year is consistent with the culture of the school and its commitment to its students.

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