



## 2018 LOUISIANA TEACHER + PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

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The Louisiana Department of Education is proud to announce the 2018 Teacher and Principal of the Year winners. These educators are making exceptional gains with students, pushing them to achieve at the highest levels in the state. Their commitment to student success exemplifies Louisiana's teaching profession.

The Teacher and Principal of the Year semi-finalists, finalists, and Louisiana's Milken Award winners were honored at the 11th Annual Cecil J. Picard Educator Excellence Awards Gala in partnership with **Dream Teachers** on Friday, July 28, 2017.

**Congratulations to these outstanding educators!**

### 2018 OVERALL TEACHER OF THE YEAR



**KIMBERLY ECKERT**  
West Baton Rouge Parish

**Kimberly Eckert** has been teaching in West Baton Rouge Parish for nine years. In addition to teaching English I at Brusly High School, she has also served as a special education inclusion teacher, a reading interventionist, speech teacher, mentor and master teacher, as well as an instructional coach. Eckert holds a Bachelor of Social Work, completed her teacher preparation program through LRCE and obtained a Master's Degree in Special Education from Northwestern State University. In 2016, Kimberly was named as the Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators (LACUE) Teacher of the Year for high schools. Previously, she won the same award for middle schools, and in 2013, Kimberly was selected as the West Baton Rouge Parish Middle School Teacher of the Year for work as a special education teacher. Kimberly has been awarded several grants to further educational initiatives, is a Kagan Scholarship winner, a Discovery Star Educator, and has had student work showcased on local TV stations in Baton Rouge. Kimberly has presented at local and state conferences and has had work featured in LACUE publications on integrating technology for struggling learners in a flipped classroom.

### 2018 OVERALL PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR



**THOMAS BYLER**  
Vermilion Parish

**Tommy Byler** has been in the education field for 26 years and has served in various leadership capacities. He is a graduate of the University of Louisiana-Lafayette and received his Master's degree from the American College of Education. Currently, Tommy serves as the principal of North Vermilion High School, after previously serving as the school's assistant principal, athletic director, and head football coach. Additionally, Byler held roles in the Louisiana High School Athletic Association and the Louisiana Association of Student Councils. Prior to his administrative term, Tommy taught Biology II - Anatomy and Physiology, Physical Science, and Algebra I. While teaching, Tommy was selected twice to represent his school as Teacher of the Year. Under Byler's leadership as principal of North Vermilion High, the school has remained an A school, and the school's school performance score rose from a 92.9 to 119.0 over three years. Tommy holds teachers and students to high standards, while supporting and empowering all to succeed.

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## 2018 TEACHER DIVISION WINNERS



**ROSEMARY GRIMM**  
Elementary - Bossier Parish



**MARCY MAHLER**  
Middle - Lafourche Parish



**ANGELINA DRAGO**  
High - Tangipahoa Parish

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## 2018 PRINCIPAL DIVISION WINNERS



**CLEO PERRY, JR.**  
Elementary - East Baton Rouge



**BOBBYE DELANEY**  
Middle - Cameron Parish



**DAVID GRAY**  
High - Union Parish

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## 2018 TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS



**LORRAINE  
FEDISON-WINDER**  
FirstLine Schools



**BRENDA SIMMONS**  
Jackson Parish



**SARAH GROS**  
Lafayette Parish



**SARAH BUTLER**  
Rapides Parish



**JOSHUA JOHN  
DAVID PAUL**  
St. Helena Parish

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## 2018 PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR FINALISTS



**ELIZABETH CHATELAIN**  
Evangeline Parish



**SHANNON FOOLKES**  
Calcasieu Parish



**TWAINNA CALHOUN**  
Ouachita Parish



**SANDRA JONES**  
Richland Parish



**SARAH ALLEN**  
St. Martin Parish

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## 2018 TEACHER OF THE YEAR SEMI-FINALISTS

**GRANT GUSSMAN**  
Advocates for Academic  
Excellence in Education

**CHASITY HATSFELT**  
Allen Parish

**MELISSA BLANCHARD**  
Assumption Parish

**JENNIFER HEARD**  
Belle Chasse Academy

**DONNA GRANGER**  
Cameron Parish

**SHANDA BESSON**  
Central Community  
School District

**ALEX BELL**  
Collegiate Academies

**JOHN UNDERWOOD**  
East Baton Rouge Parish

**BRITTANY SMITH**  
Edward Hynes  
Charter School

**MANDI KEIGLEY**  
Iberia Parish

**LANA MYERS**  
Jefferson Davis Parish

**TAMEKA STAR**  
Natchitoches Parish

**INGRID RACHAL**  
Orleans Parish

**JENNIFER BROCK**  
St. John the Baptist  
Parish

**RACHEL WHITE**  
Webster Parish

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## 2018 PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR SEMI-FINALISTS

**MIA EDWARDS**  
Ascension Parish

**ANGELA GREGOIRE**  
Assumption Parish

**LAKESHA REESE-PENN**  
City of Baker  
School District

**ALLISON JUNOT**  
Iberville Parish

**MICHAEL BECK**  
Jackson Parish

**TAMARA WARNER**  
Jefferson Parish

**JOHN MOUTON**  
Lafayette Parish

**SHANNA STEED**  
Livingston Parish

**DEWAYNE VINES**  
Rapides Parish

**JULIE WAGUESPACK**  
St. James Parish

**DAWN CHAISSON**  
St. Mary Parish

**MARK TORBERT**  
Terrebonne Parish

**RHONDA ROBERTS**  
Vernon Parish

**LAREE TAYLOR**  
West Baton Rouge Parish

**DEBORAH BRIAN**  
Zachary Community  
School District

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## 2016 MILKEN EDUCATOR AWARD WINNERS



**CATHERINE RANDALL**  
St. Bernard Parish



**DEVON WILLIS-JONES**  
Iberia Parish

