

## Abington hits awards trifecta

It is a triumph for a school district when one of its employees is named the best in his or her field statewide. For two employees to be so named is, of course, an even higher achievement. When three employees from the same school district win that honor, it is a rare trifecta indeed.

The Abington School District in Montgomery County has achieved exactly that:

- **Jeffrey Chou**, 6th grade teacher at Highland Elementary School, is the 2011 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year
- **Cynthia Begley**, an instructional education support professional at Roslyn Elementary School, was named 2010 Pennsylvania Support Professional of the Year
- **Dr. Amy Sichel**, superintendent of schools, was selected as the 2010 Pennsylvania Superintendent of the Year.

The three winners were honored at a dinner sponsored by PSEA's Mideastern Region, and were presented plaques from Region President Jim Sando.

Chou was selected as one of only 12 Teacher of the Year finalists in Pennsylvania. Students and colleagues commented how he puts the needs of students first, getting children actively involved in their education, and how he was an early

user of educational technology to enhance teaching and learning.

"Mr. Chou is an excellent role model for students as well as for fellow teachers," said Dr. Marianne Kaemmer, principal of Highland Elementary School. "He goes to great lengths to support students—including sending encouraging, congratulatory letters to his students when they enter high school and when they graduate."

Begley, an instructional education support professional at Roslyn Elementary School, was nominated for 2010 Pennsylvania Support Professional of the Year by Christine Darrah, a special education teacher at Roslyn.

Dr. Kevin Osborne, Roslyn principal, described how special Begley is and all that she does for the school district.

"She volunteers for many activities at Roslyn, including being the lead producer for the school's Rocket Vision TV programming," Osborne said. "She spends countless hours in support of Abington students."

Among her many activities, Begley has served on the Opportunities to Learn Initiative Committee; has been a PTO president; and has been a volunteer for Citizens and Police Together (CAPT) ac-



*PSEA board member James Sando and three statewide award winners in the Abington School District: From left, Cynthia Begley, Jeffrey Chou, and Amy Sichel.*

tivities, and the post-prom party.

Robert Hughes, a Roslyn student, praised her at a recent school board meeting, stating that Abington is fortunate to have such a dedicated professional. A special surprise assembly at Roslyn honored Begley when the award was announced.

The Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators' Superintendent of the Year program pays tribute to the talent and vision of schools superintendents.

Jim Buckheit, the executive director of PASA, announced Sichel's selection at a press conference attended by School Board President Raymond McGarry, who nominated Sichel; state Rep. Josh Shapiro, D-Montgomery, and many officials and representatives of Abington Twp., the school district, and the district's partner organizations. ■

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