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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Brown Middle School science teacher selected Richmond's 2010 Teacher of the Year**

Latonya Waller, a science teacher at Lucille Brown Middle School, is having one terrific school year. Recently, she was named a recipient of this year's R.E.B. Award for Teaching Excellence, an honor that included a \$10,000 cash award for educational travel and study abroad.

And now, the eight-year veteran has been selected Richmond Public Schools' 2010 Teacher of the Year. The award was announced Nov. 19 at a special reception held at the Marriott that recognized all of the 51 Richmond City educators who had been nominated for the district's top teaching honor.

Waller, who earned both her bachelor of science and master of education degrees at Virginia Commonwealth University, has spent the last three years teaching earth and life sciences at Brown Middle. She previously taught at Broad Rock Elementary School and was selected that school's 2005 Teacher of the Year.

"Why did I become a teacher? Simply put, first and foremost, I love children," Waller wrote in her nomination packet. "I love learning and I love teaching. It is my passion. There are individuals that I believe excel in certain careers because of natural abilities, dutiful preparation and ongoing reflection and refinement. In life, I believe that individuals continuously attempt to find this niche; teaching is mine."

Parents like Bill Yates agree.

“Over the three years that my younger son, Johnny Mack Yates, has been in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program at Lucille Brown Middle School I have had the opportunity to observe the dedication and effectiveness of Ms. Latonya Waller,” wrote Yates. “Ms. Waller takes learning beyond the classroom - inspiring her students to help out on ecology oriented community service projects... She helps nurture ideas and guides students through the process without ever taking over their projects or doing work for them... The students view Ms. Waller as a fair, dedicated teacher who will go out of her way for any student - and one who expects students to reciprocate.”

Along with teaching science, Waller also coaches Brown's Mind Games team and sponsors the school's science, engineering and forensics clubs. She received \$1,000 for being named Richmond's 2010 Teacher of the Year.

Crystal Potee from Boushall Middle School was first runner-up. She received \$750.

Open High School's Emily Betts was named second runner-up and the recipient of \$500.

The other top ten finalists were: Annie Givler, Stuart Elementary; Lauren Leake, Westover Hills Elementary; Joan McClellan, Fox Elementary; LaChaunne Perry, Woodville Elementary; Tracey Rawls, Jones Elementary; Elizabeth Vermillion, Holton Elementary; and Tiana Wilson, Clark Springs Elementary.

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