

# CAPITAL GAIN



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LEFT: Coventry High English teacher Julie Lima-Boyle, 2011's Teacher of the Year in Rhode Island, made a visit to the nation's capital last week, where she read for public service announcements (above) and met Rhode Island Senator Jack Reed (right), as well as getting a few minutes to talk to President Barack Obama one-on-one.



## R.I.'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR TAKES TRIP TO D.C.; MEETS PRESIDENT

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COVENTRY — This year's representative for all the hardworking teachers in Rhode Island, Julie Lima Boyle of Coventry, had the pleasure of traveling to Washington D.C. to lend a helping hand towards current educational issues and meet the 49

other states' Teachers of the Year.

Oh, and she also shook hands and shared a few words with President Barack Obama.

"It was an amazing experience. He shook my hand, asked what subject I taught and we spoke about the importance of literacy in education," said Boyle, an English teacher at Coventry High School. "We talked

about how crucial literacy is in not only education, but also in life.

"He spoke about how he would like to celebrate teachers; we have taken a bashing in the last few years and I know many of us are feeling a little bruised," she continued.

According to Boyle, during their conversation, the President mentioned a current initiative to encour-

age and elevate the teaching profession in the country called Project RESPECT. The initiative's acronym stands for Recognizing Education Success, Professional Excellence and Collaborative Teaching. According to a release, the Obama Administration has included the competitive program in their 2013

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# Teacher meets Obama in D.C.

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proposed budget, to be funded with \$5 billion, and challenge teachers, unions, colleges and other stakeholders to work together towards reforming the field of teaching.

Boyle explained that the initiative was discussed at length during her week in Washington D.C.

"Right now, it is a 13-page working document of policy," she said, explaining how the project would be consider "different pathways into teaching" for purposes of mentoring, teacher training and leveling out some of the major differences in the profession across the country.

"In the Northeast, it is pretty well-known that the teachers are a little more highly regarded than in other parts of the country. For example, I have a friend in Texas, an English teacher, who has 210 students—to teach and correct writing assignments for that many students, I don't know how you would do that," she said. "In Coventry, our cap is 125 students at the high school."

According to Education Secretary Arne Duncan in a release, the goal of the initiative would be to have all the sectors—states, districts, unions, principals, schools of education—lead the nationwide change.

"We need to change society's views of teaching—from the factory model of yesterday to the professional model of tomorrow—where teachers are revered as thinkers, leaders and nation-builders. No other profession carries a greater burden for securing our economic future. No other profession holds out more promise of opportunity to children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. And no other profession deserves more respect," he said.



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**Coventry's Julie Lima-Boyle was given special treatment, along with the other 49 Teachers of the Year from across the country, including a gala ball invitation, which she attended with her husband.**

Boyle explained how every Teacher of the Year was given a few minutes to meet the President and discuss current educational issues. They were lined up, according to height, and were guided into the Blue Room of the White House for their one-on-ones. Afterwards, they each proceeded to the coral risers in the East Room for the formal announcement of the 2012 National Teacher of the Year, Rebecca Mielwoczi from Los Angeles.

"I was one of the last to go in and meet him because I'm short," said Boyle, jokingly adding, "so I had lots of time to stand around and get butterflies."

"There was a massive amount of secu-

rity, obviously... and afterwards, we were brought back to the Blue Room where we had met him and watched the Marine One as a little black dot in the sky [fly] in. We watched the President walk out, get on, do his salute and fly off into the distance. It was surreal," she said.

Boyle explained that throughout the entire trip, she felt extremely honored—and humbled—to represent all of Rhode Island's teachers.

"The moment I was standing there, three feet from the President, speaking about Rhode Island teachers and the importance of teaching, I felt [lucky for] the opportunity," she said.