

Paon honored as school's 'Teacher of Year'

Lauded by administrators for creativity, professionalism

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COVENTRY — The Alan Shawn Feinstein school community took time during a portion of Thursday's end of the year luncheon to honor the ASFMS Teacher of the Year, Abby Paon.

Assistant Principal Joseph Pirraglia said Paon has been a teacher since 2002 and has spent her entire professional career at Alan Shawn

Feinstein Middle School.

"Ms. Paon is an extremely gifted and skilled educator," he said. "As a teacher of both seventh and eighth-grade science, Ms. Paon has a broad and in-depth knowledge of science content and the ability to incorporate that knowledge into engaging and cohesive lessons. Other teachers seek her out for her knowledge, ideas, plans and /or for a better understanding of the detailed and demanding new science cur-

riculum."

Pirraglia credited Paon with understanding key elements of effective planning and said her delivery of lessons is strategic, varied and challenging, adding that her assessments not only guide improvements

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Feinstein science teacher Abby Paon is presented the school's Teacher of the Year award by Dr. Arthur Lisi.

Kendra Leigh Miller • Daily Times



Paon recognized Thursday as FMS Teacher of Year

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in her own teaching, but help improve the performance of the department as well.

"She has a dual role of science teacher and curriculum coordinator and regularly assumes the role of leader in the department and facility meetings," he said. "In the last several years, Ms. Paon had piloted and now has implemented across the department a program of academic vocabulary that has enriched the science curriculum."

He said her passion and enthusiasm is visible in the way she engages her students in inquiry-based learning experiences while building their understanding of science core ideas at the conceptual level.

"Ms. Paon is knowledgeable, always seeking to learn and share best practices with others," said the assistant principal. "In addition, she recognizes those who struggle and makes concerted attempts to appeal to these students by bringing in alternate, varied and relevant experiences and demonstrations."

Assistant Principal Mary Lou

Betz said Paon is a Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) liaison and a member of the Coventry Public Schools Science Task Force.

"As such, she has demonstrated excellent leadership skills in the way she supports teachers and facilitates a deeper understanding of the NGSS," she said. "She regularly attends regional and national conferences, including an ASCD Leading and Learning conference, NSTA regional conferences, and this year, attended the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) conference in San Diego."

Paon has presented at RIDE workshops and has led several presentations over the years at the Rhode Island Middle Level Educators conferences.

This year, she assisted in developing the NextGen Personalized Learning Initiative, a Great School Partnership/NESSC grant around the growth mindset vision, which will bring \$25,000 to the middle school.

"In addition to leading the detail work of developing stan-



One of Paon's initiatives to bring science to her students was to introduce them to a two-foot-tall robot that they could program using code.

Daily Times file photo

dards to NGSS, Ms. Paon was instrumental in bringing 'Hour of Code' into our school," Betz said.

"Hour of Code" was a building-wide program to engage all students in understanding and experimenting with computer coding and programming.

"Then she worked with the district and helped facilitate a demonstration in her classroom of a professionally-designed and manufactured robot where students could actually see how computer coding was used to move and manipulate this two-foot-tall robot."

Alan Shawn Feinstein School Principal Dr. Arthur Lisi said Paon continually contemplates how best to challenge students and make them ready for the technology and sciences in the world.

"She is currently working on two major opportunities for

ASFMS and is part of a team working to bring a new course to the school based on computer sciences and programming, based on modules developed at the National Science Foundation," Lisi said. "The other initiative is bringing a STEM/STEAM class to the middle school that would bridge design and engineering elements with science, math and the arts."

The principal said both of these exploratory courses are scheduled to be piloted in the fall.

Ms. Paon is unequivocally respected by all members of the school community," he said. "On our school improvement team, she is a natural leader who leads by example and is constantly looking to improve her practice in the classroom and share good practice with her colleagues. She is passionate about the science as she is about her students and goes to extraordinary lengths to show how important and relevant science is in our daily lives."