Val Kilar Named Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School's Educator of the Year

Rumson–Fair Haven Regional High School is proud to announce that Mrs. Val Kilar has been named the 2026–2027 Teacher of the Year. A dedicated science teacher, Mrs. Kilar is recognized for taking students' ideas seriously and giving them the guidance and encouragement to pursue questions that matter to them.

One example from her Honors Biology class illustrates her approach. For a research project, a student proposed writing a Java program to simulate how insecticide affects bee populations so he could investigate the question without harming live insects. Mrs. Kilar recognized the potential in his idea and took the time to understand his approach. Drawing on her expertise in biology, she guided him through a project that brought together science, computer programming, and mathematics.

The student's mother shared that he put more effort into the project than he had ever put into his schoolwork. He discovered how his classes connected to work he might want to pursue in the future and carried that same effort into his other subjects. For Mrs. Kilar, supporting a student's curiosity meant giving him room to try something different and committing the time to help him see it through.

Mrs. Kilar also connects with students outside the classroom as the advisor to the Science League and the Scientific Frontier Club. Through both activities, she gives students opportunities to explore their interests in science, challenge themselves, and learn alongside classmates who share their curiosity. Her work with these groups gives her another way to get to know students and encourage them as they discover what they enjoy and what they can do.

"Mrs. Kilar listens when students bring her an idea and puts in the time to help them develop it," said Principal Stephen Sarles. "She helps students see how what they learn at RFH connects to their own interests and what they might pursue after high school. We are proud to recognize her as our Teacher of the Year."

Rumson–Fair Haven Regional High School congratulates Mrs. Val Kilar on this well-deserved recognition and thanks her for her outstanding contributions to the RFH community.

(picture below)



Ms. Val Kilar, RFH's 2026 Educator of the Year, is surrounded by administrators upon learning about the honor (pictured l-r: Seth Herman, Supervisor of World Languages, Physical Education/Health and Fine and Performing Arts, Meredith Brow, Assistant Principal, Suzanne Crowley, Supervisor of English and Social Studies, Lauren Malaney, Supervisor of Special Education, Lee McDonald, Superintendent, Val Kilar, Stephen Sarles, Principal, Jon Pennetti, Supervisor of STEM, Kristen Ferrari, Supervisor of Technology, and Sarah Fitzgerald, Director of Curriculum.

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