

# Nyack's Mike Smith a semi-finalist in 2015 Grammy Music Educator awards

THE HALL MONITOR



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(Photo: Peter Carr)

Come February, there's a chance you might glimpse Nyack High School band leader Michael Smith on stage at the 2015 Grammy awards show telecast.

The long-time Rockland County music educator is one of 25 semi-finalists in the running for the Grammy's second annual [Music Educator Award](http://www.grammyintheschools.com/programs/grammy-music-educator-award) (<http://www.grammyintheschools.com/programs/grammy-music-educator-award>).

Ten finalists will be announced in De

Before joining the Nyack school district in 2012, [Smith spent 28 years at the East Ramapo](http://archive.lohud.com/article/20120708/NEWS03/307080040/Beloved-music-man-lands-his-feet) (<http://archive.lohud.com/article/20120708/NEWS03/307080040/Beloved-music-man-lands-his-feet>) school district teaching music and nurturing the marching band program into a nationally recognized organization. He was laid off from East Ramapo in 2012 amid the district's budget crisis. cember and the winner will be flown to Los Angeles to accept the award and attend the Grammy awards show on Saturday, Feb. 7. The prize comes with a chunk of change - \$10,000 for the winner, \$1,000 each for 9 finalists. Matching grants are awarded to the schools of all 10 finalists.

At Nyack, Smith recently received tenure, and leads the concert, jazz and marching band in addition to teaching music classes.

In a new part-time arrangement with East Ramapo, Smith is back to directing the marching band this year in addition to his work at Nyack. (Look for the full story in The Journal News and on lohud.com later this week.)

Smith is the only educator from New York who made the Grammy's semi-finalist list. He was plucked from a list of more than 7,000 nominees across the county, including a handful from Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties.

For a full list of semi-finalists and more information about the award, go [here](http://www.grammyintheschools.com/features/announcing-25-semifinalists-music-educator-award) (<http://www.grammyintheschools.com/features/announcing-25-semifinalists-music-educator-award>).

The Grammy Foundation started the Music Educator Awards program last year to recognize the "significant role of teachers in shaping their students' musical experiences."

Current, full-time educators in the U.S. who teach music in public or private schools, kindergarten through college are eligible for nominations. Teachers in after-school, private studios, or other educational settings are not eligible. Teachers who are planning to retire at the end of the current school year are also not eligible.

The inaugural recipient was Kent Knappenberger of Westfield Academy and Central School in Westfield, N.Y. Check out last year's video tribute to him [here](#):