The 2017 recipient of the NYS AHPERD Secondary Health Education Teacher of the Year Award is Jessica Wright.

Jessica has been teaching health in the Central Valley School District for the past 16 years. In addition to teaching health education at both the high school and middle school levels, she has taught first aid and CPR training, parenting courses, and an elective class called “Critical Issues In Health.” This is a class where unique learning takes place by including a field trip to a federal prison. The inmates talk candidly about their poor choices that placed them in jail and stress the importance of education and staying away from drugs. To meet the needs of special education students, Jessica helped create a curriculum that presents the same important health information in a developmentally appropriate way. Jessica is an active member of the Catskill Zone and has presented at numerous zone and state conferences. Her colleague stated, “Jessica is a master at using unique approaches to achieve her objectives. During class discussions, she can get everyone involved and she makes everyone feel like their opinion matters. She is an excellent facilitator and as a result easily establishes a rapport with all of her students. This connection enables them to feel safe in her classroom and encourages them to get involved in important class discussions.” Her assistant principal added, “Because of the respect Jessica shows her students, they in turn respect her and each other. No matter the topic, difficult or controversial, there is an atmosphere free from judgments.” President Wolfe, it is my honor to present to you the recipient of the 2017 Secondary Health Teacher of the Year Award, Jessica Wright.