

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 1**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Patty Guzman

**Position:** 7/8 Grade ELA Teacher

**School:** Holy Family School

**School District if applicable:** Archdiocese of Philadelphia

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Jennifer D'Amelio

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Patty is one of the hardest working teachers that I know. She has such a strong love of learning, and it shows in her background. Patty has 5 certifications - ESL; Elementary K-6; Middle School English; Spanish PK-12; and Reading Specialist PK-12. Her credentials are impressive, and this also translates to her classroom. Patty has been teaching for 27 years, and she is one of the best teachers I have ever worked with. I have had the pleasure of working with her as both a colleague and as her supervisor.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Patty provides a strong, stable classroom for her students, first and foremost. Each day they come to school, they know that Patty is going to engage them, challenge them, and support them. Patty teaches English/Language Arts, and is a strong supporter of literacy and strong writing skills. She takes that passion and uses it in her classroom to get her students reading consistently and writing daily. In addition to her stellar instruction, Patty engages with her students in a way that fosters strong relationships. They know that they can go to her for assistance, but they also know that Patty is going to hold

them to a high standard and call them out when necessary. It is my hope that my own child will one day have Patty as his ELA teacher.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Patty has always been a team player. She works with her grade partners to ensure that the students get what they need in terms of instruction, and she also strives to provide them with other opportunities throughout the year. Recently, Patty organized a Veterans' Day presentation in which students in grades 5-8 got to meet veterans who live in their community - parents, coaches, teachers, etc. She coordinated with her grade partners and the administration to ensure that everything aligned. She also organized the schedule for the event and distributed that amongst her colleagues and the administration. Patty also works with her colleagues to ensure that what she is teaching is, and what they are teaching, crosses the curriculum.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Patty strives to be the best role model she can possibly be. She works hard to live up to the standards she holds for her students, and she consistently models that behavior. She praises them when they meet and exceed those standards, and she supports and encourages them in achieving their goals.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 2**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Lilly Scotti

**Position:** 1st grade teacher

**School:** Rainbow Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Coatesville Area School District

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Cory Butler

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Parent of a former student

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Lilly Scotti was a first year teacher during the 2022-2023 school year. She taught, and continues to teach 1st grade at Rainbow Elementary.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Most parents might be hesitant to learn that their child's teacher is a recent college graduate and about to embark on his/her first year of teaching. I felt similarly, until the very moment my son and I met Lilly Scotti for the first time. Lilly radiates positivity and warmth. Every day she made an effort to connect with not only my son, but all of her students. It was clear to everyone who had the pleasure to witness it, that a close bond had formed between Lilly and her "babies" in that classroom. My son arrived to 1st grade with an established IEP; receiving services for speech, occupational therapy, and other various special education needs. Lilly made an effort to not only connect with my son, who had otherwise struggled socially, and made sure she met him where he was academically and emotionally. I will never forget our IEP meeting towards the end of our son's 1st grade year. Lilly's attention to detail, compassion and positivity were felt by all

of us in attendance at that meeting. In fact, at the conclusion of the meeting as my husband and I walked to our car, we both cried happy tears. The tears were the result of an overwhelming sense of relief and happiness. We felt, and continue to feel, that our son could have easily slipped through the cracks if he had any teacher other than Lilly Scotti. One last testament to the bond that Lilly created with our son was evident recently when our family happened to be dining at the same restaurant as her. Our son, who is an extreme introvert, ran to her and gave her the biggest hug. Lilly will forever have a special place in our hearts. Any student that steps foot in her classroom in the years to come is the luckiest in the world!

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Lilly Scotti made efforts to connect with each and every student of hers. During our parent/teacher conference it was evident that she truly cared about our son, and went above and beyond to make sure he was thriving. Currently, my son is in 2nd grade and I have been made aware the his 2nd grade teacher has often checked in with Lilly Scotti to get her opinion and/or advice on how best to connect with not only my son, but other former students. This is a true testament to the bond she formed with her students.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Lilly Scotti continues to be a role model for our son. She demonstrated the ability to be compassionate, kind and understanding. Our son had the pleasure of witnessing first hand what a phenomenal teacher looks like and how impactful her presence has and will continue to be.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 3**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Meghan Funderburg

**Position:** Autism Support Teacher

**School:** Downingtown East High School

**School District if applicable:** Downingtown Area School District

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Annette Ward

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** colleague

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Meghan holds a Bachelors in Special Education from West Chester University, and a Masters in Education from Pennsylvania State University. Meghan has been teaching for fifteen years. She presently runs the Austic Support Classroom at Downingtown East High School, her class encompasses grades 9th through 12th. Meghan is Safety trained, and is currently obtaining a certification to teach this course. Meghan is involved in extra curricular activities as well.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Meghan manages the Austic Support Classroom. The children and the paraprofessionals enjoy Meghan's class the most. I currently have responsibility for four of her students at different times throughout the day. I have asked each student what their favorite part of their day is, and they have all said "being in Ms. Funderburg's room". Meghan has patience and grace in teaching the children everyday skills that they will need to succeed in life. She also oversees the Occupational Therapy for the Life Skills classroom. Meghan is attentive and well versed in each of her students needs. She is welcoming,

patient and kind and encourages each of her students to be at their best. Meghan also directs the Best Buddies program at Downingtown East High School which matches the special education children with regular education peers and their families. Meghan organizes monthly Best Buddies meetings and outings. Meghan, along with her colleague Anne Marie Matta, coach the Unified Bocce Team at Downingtown East High School and runs the Unified Bocce Club. Meghan caring and guiding way is a joy to witness and all of her students really enjoy having her as a teacher.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Meghan successfully navigates the vast differences in her students and gently guides each of them to shine and be at their best! This is not a small undertaking, as each student has vastly different achievement levels in academics. Meghan monitors their progress, one on one, and observes and gently guides them to do more. She also works with the administration to make sure students in the work program, are dressed professionally, and have a job coach to help them learn their positions. Meghan is constantly keeping the parents informed of the students progress and concerns and issues that may arise. Meghan successfully manages the assisting paraprofessional assignments and the student progress. There are many moving parts that need to be managed each day and Meghan always manages each situation with a smile.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Meghan is an exemplary teacher and role model. Meghan always uses kind words, is courteous, is empathetic, and looks out for any need one of her students or any student in the High School may have. If Meghan sees a child with food insecurities, she welcomes them to visit her classroom for a snack or a drink. The school received a banner for becoming one of only four schools in the state, and the first in Chester County, to be recognized by Special Olympics National Headquarters as a Unified Champion School. East was also recognized as one of a handful of ESPN Home Roll Schools in November of 2023. This recognition would not have been possible if it were not for the dedication of Meghan Funderburg and the positive environment she fosters and her love for her profession. Meghan's students enjoy coming to school and look forward to having class with her. She opens minds and hearts on a daily basis and can make them receptive to learning. She is a joy to work with!

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 4**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Jamie Mozzone

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Great Valley High School

**School District if applicable:** Great Valley

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Heidi Capetola

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal/Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

I have been an educator for over thirty years and have worked with many, many incredible teachers. When I think of the very best teachers with whom I have worked, some are content experts, some develop incredible relationships with students, others are highly intelligent, while others have super-creative ideas. Dr. Jamie Mozzone is all of this and more! Jamie has been a teacher at Great Valley High School for the past nine years. During her tenure she has taught Honors English, AP Language and Composition, Creative Writing, and our newest English elective, Digital Media Communications. Jamie and her students create a daily newscast, "Great Morning, Great Valley" that chronicles all that is happening in our school. Additionally, she is the advisor of our school newspaper, The Surveyor, and the advisor of our award-winning literary and art magazine, Mosaic. Before joining us in Great Valley she was a high school English teacher in Virginia. She has been teaching high school students for over 20 years. In addition to being an amazing teacher, she is a voracious learner. Jamie was a member of the inaugural class of doctoral students in Educational Leadership program at West Chester University. She chose to study the impact that homework has on student learning, and has implemented her findings in her work with students. Dr. Mozzone does not assign very much homework. Instead, she utilizes every moment she has with

students to facilitate rich class discussions and challenges them to read and think critically. Year after year Dr. Mozzone's students score among the highest in the school on both the Keystone Exams and the AP Language and Composition exams. But more importantly, Dr. Mozzone sees potential in every student and supports students in becoming critical readers, writers, and thinkers. She helps students build their confidence in their abilities and pursue their passions. She is caring, loving, and kind. Dr. Jamie Mozzone is so talented, and could choose to pursue many other occupations, but as she has often shared with me her heart is happiest when she is with her students in the classroom.

**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Just this week Dr. Mozzone reached out to me to let me know she nominated two of her students to attend the George Mason Journalism conference this summer. For most teachers, this is where the teacher's role would end. Jamie, on the other hand, reached out to me to discuss some fundraising ideas and in her words, "I love that so many of my kids are interested in growing within the field of digital media journalism, and I want to support them in their commitment to GV's program." Another example of Jamie's commitment to her students is her tireless work ethic. The college application process requires letters of recommendations from teachers. These letters take a lot of time for teachers to write so in order not to unduly burden teachers our counseling department recommends "cutting off" student requests for letters at 20 each year. Dr. Mozzone connects with her students and knows her students so well. As a result she is one of the teachers who many, many students ask to write their letter. Does Jamie end her list at 20? No, she is tireless in her work ethic and commitment to her students. This year she wrote 49 letters for students in our senior class. These letters take hours to write, and this is an "extra" for our teachers. Jamie loves her students, and wants to support them all their endeavors so she happily writes, and writes, and writes. I can appreciate Dr. Mozzone's positive impact on her students as a principal and a parent. A few years ago my son was a student in Dr. Mozzone's AP Lang class. He is a "math and science" kid who gained confidence and grew so much as a writer with Dr. Mozzone. She wrote my son's letter of recommendation and it was amazing to read how well she knew him, and how she communicated what she knew about him as a person and a student. My son is currently a senior in college, and he has shared with me often how grateful he is to have had Dr. Mozzone.



**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Dr. Mozzone is a leader in our English department. She is always willing to share strategies and innovative classroom activities with the other teachers in the department. Great Valley High School is fortunate to have an incredible English department, and a few years ago Jamie and another teacher were selected to teach AP Lang. There were years when GVHS had only two sections of AP Lang. Year after year the requests have grown. Last year we had five sections, and this year we have six! As principal, I attribute this to the excellence of Jamie and her partner AP Lang teacher. They plan together, share materials and activities, and both work to develop ALL students. One might wonder if our scores have decreased as more kids have decided to take this course. Quite the contrary. Year after year most of Jamie's students score in the 3-5 range on the AP Literature and Composition Exam which earns many students college credit. Last year our long time newspaper advisor retired. Jamie would be the new advisor for this school year. Before the teacher retired, Jamie met with the teacher and current students in the newspaper class to learn about the history of The Surveyor and what was important to them as they planned for this transition. As the Digital Media Communications class was being planned, the former advisor and students felt strongly that they did not want to lose the "paper" newspaper. It was decided that a hard copy publication would occur three times/year and our Fall/Winter edition was recently published. It excellent, and students really appreciate creating a digital presence, while also continuing the tradition of having a print copy newspaper for our school and broader community. This is just another example of Jamie's collaborative nature and empathic leadership style.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Dr. Mozzone is a role model to our entire school community. As principal, I can't count the number of times parents and students have told me how much they love Dr. Mozzone. She is kind, caring, intelligent, creative, driven, and curious. She is a student-centered teacher who wants the BEST for all of her students. Jamie wants students to believe in themselves and their abilities, and to follow their passions. And she will do anything in her power to help them realize their dreams. I think it's fitting to conclude this award nomination with a story about how one of Dr. Mozzone's students became a published author when he was 20 years old - just a few years after the time he was

sitting in Dr. Mozzone's English class. Joshua Stehle, Great Valley High School Class of 2020, recently published a book titled *I Am A Superhero Expert - Growing Up with my Autistic Brother*. In the Acknowledgments section at the back of the book Josh thanks seven people individually, four of whom are his immediate family members. But the very first person Josh thanks is Dr. Jamie Mozzone. In his words, "To Dr. Jamie Mozzone, my love for writing flourished in your 10th grade classroom. Before AP Language, I couldn't have been bothered to open a Word document unless my grade was on the line. Now, I do it during my free time. This book would not have been possible without the support and incredible instruction I received in your English classes. Thank you."

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 5**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Christine Wilson

**Position:** English Teacher

**School:** Kennett High School

**School District if applicable:** Kennett Consolidated School District

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Lorenzo DeAngelis

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Christine has been teaching high school English for over 27 years. She has taught all grade levels and has her masters degree in English. Not only has she taught English, but she has taught a course created by her call 1960s Seminar. A wildly popular course.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Christine is one of our biggest advocates for students and staff. She is the leader of schools "Sunshine Committee" which supports staff in need. However, she is also the leader of when students are in need, she activates. Most recent example was when our community suffered an apartment fire where many of our students lived. Christine jumped right in and began collections and found ways on how we can support our students. This year, Christine has a class that struggles mightily academically, and behaviorially. Even though she is a veteran teacher, and most would think veterans receive the best/easiest schedules, they do not. Christine welcomed this challenge and took it head on. She advocates for EVERY student in her class and ensures they are getting a proper education. Interestingly, Christine is also the leader of our "Sunshine

Committee" for our staff. She is the first person to respond to staff who are in need and puts forth excellent ideas on how we can support one another. She has such a large and heart that everyone feels comfortable, non-judged, and accepted by Christine.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Christine brings English class to life. She sets high expectations and does not limit interventions to support students. When you walk into Christine's classroom, you can feel the positive environment immediately. Her class is structured and includes care, kindness, and respect. The other day, I was in Christine's classroom while she was on prep and a student knocked on the door to hand in an assignment and ended up staying for a few minutes because Christine fully engaged with the student and continued to build upon the relationship they have. It was very nice to see it evolve even though it was only 5 minutes.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Christine is a role model to her students because she leads by example. She sets the bar high and lets our students know that a diploma from Kennett High School means a lot. She is a role model by actually talking the talk and walking the walk. Christine shows up to a number of student events. Whether it be prom, homecoming, senior dinner dance, or powder puff, Christine is there. She is genuine and present with our students. Christine has so much PRIDE in Kennett High School and our students that she even leads our graduation speech committee. She makes sure that every student who has a speaking role at graduation are properly prepared to speak at our historic graduation. Christine is simply one of a kind!

## APPLICATION NUMBER: 6

### NOMINEE INFORMATION

**Name:** Alexis traver

**Position:** Teacher 1st grade

**School:** Geenwood elementary

**School District if applicable:** Kennett Consolidated School District

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### NOMINATED BY

**Your name:** Karime

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co worker

### NOMINATION:

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

1st grade teacher

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Lexi is a great teacher. She makes learning fun and goes above and beyond for the students.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

She make sure no child feels left out. Creates a lovable atmosphere .

- 4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Creates daily affirmations, positive outlook for her students.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 7**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Jackie Kirby

**Position:** 2nd grade teacher

**School:** French Creek Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Owen J. Roberts

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Rebecca Price

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Parent

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

20+ years in elementary education. Certified in special education and reading certification.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Jackie Kirby is an absolute gift to every class she has ever taught. Her cheerful, laid back personality, perfectly matches the needs of every child in her classroom. She has a heart of gold and treats every child as an individual with their own set of talents and contributions to the class. My own personal experience with Jackie dates back to the beginning of the 2022 school year. My son entered her classroom and right away Jackie recognized that something was not quite right with the way my son was choosing to communicate with her. Jackie immediately got the ball rolling to have my son evaluated to receive additional support in the classroom. What she did next was truly the remarkable part of who she is. Yes, she supported my son in the classroom and he has made leaps and bounds with her as his teacher. But she also supported my entire family. She saw things in my son that we either didn't want to or couldn't see. She took the

time to sit with me while I cried. She checked in with me daily to make sure my husband and I were on board with the current plan for our son. Jackie developed an entire behavior plan tailored specifically to the needs of my son and worked with us to reenforce the behavior plan at home. At the end of the school year, Jackie moved to the next grade level and made sure she had my son in her class again, knowing how important continuity is to his progress. This year my son is now meeting all expectations in the classroom and his behavior is improving every day, and this is because of the outstanding efforts made by this incredible educator. I know that many teachers could have ignored the needs of my child and our family and swept the issues under the rug. Jackie took them head on and never wavered in her support. My son is now on the right path in his educational journey because of her dedication. She is more than deserving of this recognition.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

In Jackie's classroom there is a large number of children that require additional support, so she works with her paraprofessional to ensure each child gets what they need throughout the day. She and Mrs. Brooks work so beautifully together. Each night my son has an update written in his behavior plan by both Mrs. Brooks and Jackie as they work in tandem to support my son. In the mornings they plan out their day based on the lesson plan and who will need support more than others to make sure every child is covered in the areas where they struggle. My son in particular has occasions where he has difficulty staying on task in certain subjects. Jackie and Mrs. Brooks know this and plan ahead of time, realizing the key to his success is that one-on-one time. Each child is given this consideration which makes for a happy and healthy learning environment.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Jackie teaches her kids not to stress about the small things. She recognizes that children are put under a lot of pressure in our current environment and wants her classroom to be a place where they feel safe and loved. The atmosphere in her room is relaxed with calm lighting and soft music. She models kindness in all of her actions and teaches inclusion to her class. A specific example is that Jackie has a large number of special needs children in her class. Her students interact with each other throughout the day as a group, careful not to exclude anyone. My son in particular often struggles socially. To

help him in this area, Jackie often pairs him with students her feels comfortable with and include him in projects. She will also invite him to special "lunch bunch" with a few other children to have an opportunity to interact in a smaller group where he feels more comfortable.



## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 8**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Sarah Wosczyzna

**Position:** First Grade Teacher

**School:** Phoenixville Area Early Learning Center

**School District if applicable:** Phoenixville Area School District

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Keya Champagne-Lee, Ed.D.

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Ms. Sarah Wosczyzna has taught elementary school for over a decade in both VA & PA. She has taught almost all grades at the elementary level. For the past 2 school years, she has served as a 1st grade teacher at the Phoenixville Area Early Learning Center. She has a Master's Degree in education and specializes in early literacy instruction. Previously, Sarah was recognized by her principal for exemplary teaching practices while in Virginia.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Ms. Wosczyzna has gone above and beyond for her students in many ways. This year, her class consists of a diverse array of needs, including students with various disabilities as well as social-emotional needs. She has individualized her approach for each student, ensuring that every child feels seen and heard. One specific practice is the "Fist to Five" routine. This restorative routine provides students with an opportunity to self-reflect on how they are feeling and receive additional support, as needed, directly from Ms. Wosczyzna. Another example is Ms. Wosczyzna's morning routine, which truly embodies our district's theme of "You Belong Here." Every child has their picture (s) displayed on

the whiteboard as the class sings and welcomes one another. As a component of this routine, Ms. Wosczyzna reads a letter to class beginning with the greeting "Dear Students" that outlines the plan for the day. This year, a new student began exhibiting some extreme behavioral challenges at the beginning of the school year. In spite of the frequency and intensity of the behaviors, Sarah maintained a high level of commitment in meeting the student's needs, often extending herself well beyond the school day. She never once became lost hope or became defeated. She demonstrated the highest level of poise and professionalism as we worked together to put the appropriate support in place for the student. Her calm demeanor was an asset to supporting this complex case. In addition to supporting the student, she also was very strategic in developing and maintaining a relationship with the family. Ms. Wosczyzna created a two way communication journal to ensure that home-school communication remained a priority.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Wosczyzna has adults that go in and out of her room all day. She enthusiastically welcomes each of them and ensures that everyone feels at home. Sarah has opened up her classroom for peers and supervisors alike to showcase the outstanding restorative and instructional work that is being done on a consistent basis. Peers and supervisors who have observed Ms. Wosczyzna have consistently commented on Sarah's clearly established routines and procedures as well as the evident rapport that she has with each child. It's not uncommon to hear Ms. Wosczyzna asking a child, "How can I help you?" Direct observations have revealed that Ms. Wosczyzna consistently demonstrates a remarkable ability to connect with students on a personal level. Her genuine interest in the well-being of each student is often demonstrated during her one-on-one check-ins with each student. She knows who needs frequent breaks, who needs time in the calming corner, who needs a hug, who needs a weighted object while sitting, and who is going to be extra tired after spending a weekend with dad. It's truly remarkable! This strong rapport has led to an inclusive atmosphere in which each student is appropriately challenged to achieve his/her personal best. Ms. Wosczyzna gets down on the same level as her students, ensuring to give them eye contact and the support that they need. This year, Ms. Wosczyzna has joined a small group of colleagues to learn even more about implementing restorative practices in her classroom. She immediately began implementing techniques upon learning them, demonstrating both innovation and a growth mindset.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Wosczyzna's kindness, calm demeanor, professionalism, and personalized approach for each student make her an outstanding role model and leader. Ms. Wosczyzna has demonstrated a growth mindset and consistently models for her students that mistakes are OK and that learning takes time and requires consistent effort. She embraces the concept of equity by ensuring that each child has access to the tools and services needed for their learning and growth. Ms. Wosczyzna is participating in various initiatives this year which demonstrates her commitment to lifelong learning and participation in the larger school community. She recently wrote a grant for materials to infuse literacy practices and STEM together during instruction. Ms. Wosczyzna has collaborated with a group of colleagues throughout the district in implementing "Building Thinking Classrooms." At a recent faculty meeting, she shared with the staff how she is using Exact Path data in real time to guide student learning. Ms. Wosczyzna shares with her students how she is continually seeking new methods and ideas in order to ensure that each student has what they need. She has expressed that each child is unique and that being unique is a gift that should be celebrated and honored.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 9**

*Application 1 of 4 for Michelle Vondran*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Michelle Vondran

**Position:** 9,11, English

**School:** Twin Valley High School

**School District if applicable:** Twin Valley School District

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Alexa Duke

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Teacher

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Michelle Vondran has been teaching for 18 years. She teaches Freshman and Juniors in the English department. She teachers honors and academic level students. She is also the English department chair for our high school.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Michelle Vondran has gone above and beyond for he children by helping her students succeeded in and outside of the classroom. She would help with any assignment if you asked her and if she knew you were working hard.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Michelle Vondran has worked alongside her students to succeeded but helping you and preparing you for the future. I remember junior year having a deep conversation with

her about college to figure out what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go. She helped me write my college essay/come up with ideas as well as my college application.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Michelle Vondran is a role model to her students because she never gives up and is a very hard worker. She is an English teacher, department chair, and she tutors students outside of school. She not only does that but has a family at home that she needs to be there for.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 10**

*Application 2 of 4 for Michelle Vondran*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Michelle Vondran

**Position:** 11, English Honors

**School:** Twin Valley High School

**School District if applicable:** Twin Valley School District

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Keira McClune

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Teacher

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Michelle Vondran has taught for 18 years at Twin Valley High School, making many students succeed. Michelle has taught 9th graders and 10th graders. She has helped countless students get in to college with outstanding scholarships, have gotten students jobs, and she helps her students understand the importance of not only what she is teaching but other life long lessons.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Being a Senior in high school, I needed assistance with college essays, applications, and research. Michelle went out of her way to help me write my college essay and also helped my apply to the universities that i was interested in. She also wrote me a letter of recommendation and helped me write several emails to college admissions staff when I needed. With all of her help I got into every college i applied for and got over \$70,000 worth of scholarships.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Michelle is the English Department Chair and I have constantly have seen her work with other teachers, principals and guidance counselors to make her students the most successful.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Michelle is such a strong women how could you not look up to her? She has helped countless people, always willing to help, empathetic, cares about the students mental health, and overall just a kind person. Nobody deserves this award more than her.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 11**

*Application 3 of 4 for Michelle Vondran*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Michelle Vondran

**Position:** 11th, English

**School:** Twin Valley High School

**School District if applicable:** Twin Valley School District

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** katie shaffer

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** teacher

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

she has taught for 17 years, teaching 9th and 11th graders

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

She had gone above and beyond by helping a student in specific who struggles with mental health. She treats all of her students like they are real people and with much respect which I admire.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

She is always going out of her way to make the classrooms and the district a better place. For example, she is looking to help upperclassmen in aiding them with the process of college applications and searches, and give students guidance that they need. Everyday she shows tremendous leadership skills which I continue to learn from everyday.



**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

She is a role model by showing leadership throughout the classroom and the school district. She is always willing to help her students and even people in school who are not her students. I know many students look up to her and she is the first person many go to when they are in need of help. For example, she has helped countless amounts of students write their college essays which everyone appreciates.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 12**

*Application 4 of 4 for Michelle Vondran*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Michelle Vondran

**Position:** 11th Grade English Teacher

**School:** Twin Valley High School

**School District if applicable:** Twin Valley School District

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Abralyn Franks

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Student

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

She teaches 9th and 11th grade English both academic and honors.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

She always offers to review essays for not only her class but also offer to help with college essays. She goes above and beyond to help her students. She is sympathetic and a great listener.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

She communicates well with other teachers. She also was a great role model for our student teacher last year. She has taken the English program and has made it better.

- 4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

She is always honest and kind to other people. She is a good person that motivates her students and encourages them to do their best rather than only focusing on success. She offers a lot of help but also is not scared to ask for help.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 13**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kelli Houpt

**Position:** First Grade Teacher

**School:** Pocopson Elem.

**School District if applicable:** Unionville Chadds Ford

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Kristin O'Neill

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Parent of student AND colleague

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Kelli has been teaching for many years. I know students she's had who are well into their twenties! Veteran teachers close to retirement have trained under Kelli. For as long as I know, her first grade classroom has been known as "Puppy Town".

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

My son, Griffin (Fin), had a challenging Kindergarten year prior to entering Kelli's class. My biggest concern was his self confidence as he often stated "I just can't be good in class." Upon entering Kelli's class as a first grader, I immediately saw the difference. He was eager to get to school each day and hung on every word Kelli said. She made him feel like he was capable of anything and everything, and held him in such high regard while also holding him accountable to grow academically and personally. He came home regularly with "love notes" from Kelli (we've saved every one) highlighting his successes and encouraging him, and he often said, "I'm the best one in the class!" (Undoubtedly, she made every student feel this way.) She brought him from below reading level upon entering 1st gr. to reaching EOY year expectations by March. I saw a distinct shift in his

maturity and responsibility for the better! Two instances will forever stick out to me. One was Fin's VIP day. She goes above and beyond to make every kid feel on top of the world on their special day, my son was no different. She invited my husband and me to join the class at the end of the day as she and the class shared things they loved about Fin. He was giddy with pride and he could barely contain the joy in his heart as he listened to all the wonderful comments. It was such a contrast to the year before. In May, I gave birth to our daughter. Fin was unable to meet her due to hospital covid policy, so he went to school the next day. Kelli had decorated the whole room, his desk, and cubby for a baby sister/big brother celebration. She held a mini "baby sprinkle" for him. There are truly no words to describe how special she made him feel, especially since he was missing mommy, and eager to meet his sister. My gratitude for Kelli goes well beyond the space available to share in this box!!

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

I am also a colleague of Kelli's. I have had the privilege of teaching with her for the past two years. While I teach a different grade level, I can attest to Kelli's genuine support of her peers. She is a leader among her first grade team and the building bringing joy and energy to the job daily. She and another colleague have begun to hold afterschool STEM clubs for students, providing them with themed activities and learning experiences. My son was able to participate in several of these, and he would come home each time jabbering on and on about what they did and learned. Everytime, he would ask if he could attend the next session. One year, my own (2nd grade) students earned a class reward. They chose to have a visit from their first grade teachers whom they loved so much, and Kelli was all too eager to accommodate. She and several other teachers visited my classroom and engaged my students to their hearts' content.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

As a parent of one of her students, I was able to frequent her classroom with my "mom hat" on, and I have never in my entire career seen a teacher hold such effective control over her students while still allowing them to explore, learn and discover. It's evident her students respect her and are eager to work hard. She challenges them and expects that they will give their best because she brings her best, while having grace for those days that are hard. I've watched her in awe of how effectively she does her job, taking mental notes on her every move to bring back to my own classroom. There is truly no

teacher like Kelli, and I am grateful to work with her, and even more grateful that my son was able to benefit from her expertise and love. She will forever be a favorite!!

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 14**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Megan Hilbolt

**Position:** Special Education Teacher

**School:** Unionville High School

**School District if applicable:** Unionville Chadds-Ford SD

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Amy Jenkins

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Megan is a special education teacher that has been teaching at Unionville High School for 8 years. Megan works with students in grades 9-12 that have an IEP. Megan is currently on the state committee for mentoring teachers interested in the field of special education.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Megan is always going above and beyond her students. You will frequently find students and staff in Megan's room during lunch and learn hour. She is currently the special education co-department chair. Megan work tirelessly to make sure that students are covered with paraprofessionals and have everything they need to not only be successful at UHS but beyond as well. Not only does Megan make sure the students are covered, she works to make sure the each student and paraprofessional have a connection to incese student engagement. Megan works with all special edcuation students in Unionville High School. During the summer, Megan works through each student's schedule to ensure they have the courses at the times that work best for each student.

The amount of time, devotion and effort Megan puts into UHS is beyond any expectations of an administrator.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Megan is the co special education department chair. Megan's work with Stephanie Brown is a true partnership. Megan and Steph are in constant communication and frequently finish each other thoughts. Between these 2 educators the special education department is able to excel.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

We have had numerous students and parents request Megan as their case manager. We also have had students want to go into the education field because of Megan. I can speak from my own son, he had an opportunity to meet Megan during the summer. When he needed help the following year in school, he said you know that teacher you work with (meaning Megan), I would like her to help me.



## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 15**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Ryan Walter

**Position:** Special Education Teacher

**School:** Westtown-Thornbury Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** West Chester Area School District

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Shawn Cruice

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor/Principal

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

This is my 4th year as building principal and Mr. Walter has been a special education teacher in the building since before I arrived. His caseload consists of students in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade. The students on Mr. Walter's caseload primarily require either life skills or intensive learning support.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Going above and beyond is just part of Mr. Walter's nature. Just last week he attended the chorus concert so that he could be there as a support for one of the students he has worked with for several years. Despite a constant staff shortage with paraprofessionals, Mr. Walter uses up his planning time or lunch time to ensure the needs of his students are met. He is always the first person staff will call if they need a hand with a student. He does all of this without complaining while maintaining a positive attitude.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

As the life skills teacher, Mr. Walter works collaboratively with his colleagues daily. he pushes into their classroom to offer additional support for the students. He models appropriate techniques for the paraprofessionals and he helps the teachers modify lessons and activities so that all students can be included and be successful.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Walter is the epitome of a role model. In addition to his kind nature and approachability, Mr. Walter is an expert in his field and valued resource to the faculty. He recently took on an additional supplemental as the After School Sports teacher so that he could connect with even more students in the school.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 16**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Adrienne Fiscus  
**Position:** 2nd Grade Teacher  
**School:** Bethany Christian School  
**School District if applicable:**  
**County of School:** Chester County  
**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Todd Kelly  
**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Adrienne has been in education both as a classroom teacher and administrator for over 25 years. Mrs. Fiscus is a graduate of Geneva College. The primary reason I am nominating her for this award is that after serving as a kindergarten teacher for the vast majority of her teaching career, she has jumped in with both feet when asked to make the leap to 2nd grade. While doing a wonderful job with this transition, she has also maintained the role of our Early Education Team Lead and a mentor teacher to our most recent Pre-K teachers. Adrienne was a recent presenter for an Early Education Conference in Lancaster. Mrs. Fiscus has a great rapport with her students and is absolutely adored by her parents. In education, differentiation is something that is often talked about and very difficult to achieve inside a full classroom. One reason the parents love Mrs. Fiscus so much is because of how gifted she is in creating a program for a student so that parents realize just how much differentiation their child is receiving inside the class. It is for these reasons that I feel that Mrs. Adrienne Fiscus would be an extremely worthy candidate to receive the Excellence in Teaching Award for the 2023-24 school year. Thank you for your consideration and if there is anything that I can help assist with please do not hesitate to contact me. Sincerely, Todd Kelly  
Head of School  
Bethany Christian School

**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

One example that comes to mind in how Mrs. Fiscus has gone above and beyond for her students is when the parents of a new student reached out prior to the start of the school year with concerns of how their son would be challenged in her class due to the fact that they felt as though their son was gifted, Mrs. Fiscus made a time to meet with the parents. In this meeting it was determined that in the areas where the boy was deemed "gifted" that a special plan would be created to ensure that he was being adequately challenged. This obviously made the parents feel validated. Since the start of the school year, Mrs. Fiscus has provided continuous communications with the family to provide them with information on exactly how their son is doing with this plan. Mrs. Fiscus did the same for a student that was struggling in a couple of areas. She created an entire plan that would allow the student to feel success and not feel as though they were being singled out during group times.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Adrienne not only serves as our second grade teacher but is also our Early Education Lead Teacher. This means that she guides the teaching team of Preschool, Pre-K and Kindergarten. As a school with two new classroom teachers in that division, Adrienne is serving as a mentor teacher as well. Inside her own classroom she works with an Aide during the morning. She works hand in hand with her to devise the lesson plans that will have the greatest impact on her students that ensure the greatest gains for the week, month and year.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Adrienne has the gift of hospitality. This is demonstrated by the fact that each year at the school fundraiser, Mrs. Fiscus auctions off an afternoon with a picnic lunch at her home on their farm. She shows the winning family her hospitality and this has rubbed off on her students. Her students have been working on ways that they can show their servant's heart and hospitality to other students here on campus.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 17**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Dennis Birtch

**Position:** Dean of Students / Social Studies Teacher

**School:** The Phelps School

**School District if applicable:**

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Jack Hasler

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Head of School

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Dennis Birtch has spent over 15 years teaching social studies at the high school level. A military veteran, Dennis weaves service and citizenship into every class that he teaches. He has been at Phelps for eight years and stepped up as our Dean of Students over the last two. During that time, he has continued to teach 12th grade Psychology and 9th Grade World History. He prefers hands on activity and is well know for his Shark Tank style Psych presentations. He also provides students with lists of projects that they can do instead of taking a one-size fits all approach. This has resulted in students working in various mediums to demonstrate their knowledge, including video game creation and social media. As Dean of Students, he works closely with students that get into disciplinary trouble. Although he is stern, Dennis is one of the most understanding, compassionate teachers at Phelps. He sits with every student that gets written up for a behavior issue and works with them to create a plan to avoid those behaviors in the future. He is well know on campus as an advocate for students and a strong supporter of their individual goals and efforts.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

One moment that stands out in my memory is a middle schooler who was struggling to adapt to life at a boarding school. He was originally from North Philadelphia and was used to a lot of noise. As a younger boarder, he also struggled with figuring out what to do with himself on weekends and in free times. As a result, the student would cause dorm and class disruptions and be written up by various teachers. Dennis sat down with the student, the teachers, and the student's family in three separate meetings to learn everything about the student's background and challenges at Phelps. He then helped put together a plan for the student and got them involved in activities each weekend. He went out of his way to include the student in activities that he ran and checked in daily on the student and with his teachers. As a result of Dennis's actions, the student started to mature much faster than he had been before. Dennis helped the student reframe his own picture of himself from a student that always got into trouble to a student that had a lot of potential. Dennis is one of the only teachers I know that can turn a detention into a confidence builder.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Dennis regularly runs classroom management sessions during teacher training and In Service days. Although not required in his position, he will sit in on other teachers' classes and give them tips and tricks on how to create a culture of respect and honesty. When I started at Phelps, Dennis and I were both social studies teachers. He went out of his way to give me advice and support as a new teacher at the school. He is always available via email and text and makes sure that every one of his colleagues can reach him.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Dennis is a military veteran and, if we are honest, he looks sort of scary. But his is a huge Taylor Swift fan (a Swifty as they say) that loves to laugh with students. 9 out of 10 students at Phelps will list him as their favorite teacher after the first few weeks. He doesn't just talk a big game, but will work alongside students as well. For example, he often leads community service trips and activities. Instead of just acting as a chaperone, Dennis works alongside the students. Dennis has also brought Brazilian Jiu Jitsu to Phelps. He trains daily at his own gym and runs it as an after school activity for the students at Phelps at least one trimester a year. As a result, he has gotten a few black eyes (which

only makes the students think he is cooler), but he also models dedication. When students ask how they can get as good as he is, he explains his training regimen and offers to help students in training and the gym. He invites students that work hard enough in the after school activity to join him at his gym and brings them to participate in tournaments. He puts his reputation in his Brazilian Jiu Jitsu community on the line when he does this and the student almost always rise to the occasion. Two years ago, he started working with a student that had never done BJJ before. Last year, that student medaled in a state wide BJJ competition. Dennis truly is an all-around teacher. In the classroom, he inspires students, but he also works hard with our residential faculty and athletics teams to model the type of behavior and personal discipline that students benefit from. As a former recipient of the FMFCU Excellence in Teaching Award, I strongly nominate Dennis for this recognition.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 18**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Dina Schmidt

**Position:** Art Teacher and Department Chair for the Arts

**School:** Church Farm School

**School District if applicable:**

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Eric Fulmer

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Dina is a highly accomplished and experienced art educator with over 20 years of experience. A graduate of Westtown School, she possesses deep familiarity with boarding and independent schools. Prior to joining CFS, Dina taught at Montgomery School, where she also served as the chair of the arts department, working with elementary and middle school students. During her time at Montgomery, she played a pivotal role on a STEAM committee dedicated to enhancing the integration of arts and sciences. Dina became a part of CFS in 2017, taking on the roles of an art teacher and chair of our arts department. Currently, she instructs students from 9th to 12th grade in a variety of art classes, including Photography (all levels), Introduction to Art, 2D Design, and Screen Printing. Additionally, Dina directs our annual Christmas Pageant and actively seeks to incorporate theater into our community. She has successfully led her department through the construction of a new arts building on campus, ensuring it meets the evolving needs of the growing arts program. A positive force for change in the CFS community, Dina has dedicated the last 6 years to enhancing the role of art in the lives of our students.



**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Dina consistently goes above and beyond for her students and colleagues in the art department. An outstanding art educator, she takes students with little to no arts experience and helps them discover their own artistic eye and passion for photography, design, or art. Working with 9th-grade students in Introduction to Art, many of them continue to pursue future courses with her, drawn in by her passion in the classroom, engaging projects, and the enjoyment of discovering hidden talents. Notably, she organizes impressive art shows to showcase student work. Two years ago, she initiated the Music and Arts Showcase (MASC) during Alumni Weekend, displaying student work across her department for all attendees. She ensured the show was streamed for parents unable to travel to a boarding school campus. This has become a yearly tradition that our artists look forward to. Dina also plans numerous trips throughout the year to expose her students to local artists. She frequently takes weekend trips to local museums such as the Brandywine River Museum or the Philadelphia Museum of Art to discuss art with students. Additionally, she organizes field trips for her photography students to destinations like Longwood Gardens or the Camden Aquarium for capturing amazing photos. These trips are memorable experiences that many students and graduates describe as the highlight of their year. Lastly, Dina serves as a caring advisor to students on campus, hosting events at her house to make them feel more at home and ensuring they have what they need for success. As a boarding school graduate herself, Dina understands the challenges of being away from home and works to ensure students are always comfortable so they can be their best selves.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Dina works closely with the other members of the arts department to create a collaborative and consistent environment across the arts curriculum. The arts faculty share an office in the new arts center, which has become a hub for innovation. The four members of the department are often found huddled together planning anything from school-wide performances to joint Halloween costumes. Dina has fostered a collaborative and innovative environment where these like-minded artists have been able to thrive. Dina spends time observing classes, providing feedback to other members of her department. This has been evident in the quality of instruction from the wide variety of arts offerings since Dina took over as chair of the department. I have enjoyed seeing their collaborative efforts flourish into amazing events like the Music

and Arts Showcase (MASC), our annual Christmas Pageant, and so many other coordinated projects and trips that the team plans together. Dina has also worked with the department to improve their curricular offerings and expand some of these offerings to include a theater component, which was new to CFS. Dina also serves as a mentor to new faculty or new department chairs and has helped in onboarding new members of faculty. She consistently demonstrates excellence in her own classroom practices and sets the example for her department and colleagues across the school.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Dina is an outstanding role model to both students and colleagues in the CFS community. Dina is a strong advocate for teachers in her department and the faculty in general, ensuring to speak up for faculty members that are feeling the effects of a busy year. She is well respected by colleagues and administrators alike and voices her opinions with care and empathy. She is also a caring role model to her students, showing both the passion and skill it takes to be a great artist and the morals and judgment it takes to be a good person. She leads by example and is often found completing projects right alongside her students to show them examples or help them better understand. She is a fierce advocate for students and is a positive force in their lives. Graduates have remarked that she believed in them well before they believed in themselves, and she always had their back. She is a caring listening ear and also a mentor that will hold students accountable for their actions. Dina is a phenomenal educator that balances multiple roles while always putting the care of students and colleagues first.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 19**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Michelle Garner

**Position:** first grade teacher

**School:** West Chester Christian School

**School District if applicable:**

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Bobbi Donaldson

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** administrator

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Since January 2004, Michelle has taught all levels, preschool through high school. She earned a BS and MEd and an early childhood certification. Recognizing how crucial it is for learners to get a good start, she chooses to teach kindergarten and first grade. Right now she's doing coursework to become a reading specialist.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

At their graduation, nine kindergarten students for over 30 minutes regaled parents and friends with songs, recitations, sample lessons, and chorographed banter without a single appearance of the teacher, Michelle. She sat on the front row with her computer to control the screen for their pointers and an electronic keyboard with which to accompany the songs, but she empowered the children themselves to both announce and present what she taught them. On an individual basis, she rescued little Sophie from "the worst day of her life" by pulling out the vaseline for the soreness under her nose from too much tissue friction. Another student, a bigger Sophie, loathe to leave the safe familiarity of her piano teacher (Michelle), has gone on to play professionally

thanks to Michelle's wisdom to push her to another piano teacher who could take her further. A child who arrived at kindergarten with zero English found himself a sympathetic friend with whom Michelle kept him paired until he could function on his own. She forebore from the usual discipline for talking aloud when she recognized occasions of language development for him. She commended the helper instead of curtailing disruptions. She also began studying language learning. Miss Garner noticed the first snowflakes of the season and interrupted the days' lesson to send the first graders for their coats to go outside. She taught them to catch snowflakes on their tongues. Beyond stars and stickers, rewards in Miss Garner's 4th grade class extended to trips to Dairy Queen (back when transportation rules were less strict). Once she offered to take a pair of sisters home even though their home was 45 minutes the opposite direction from hers. She will go the extra mile. Year after year, Miss Garner's frog in a tank appeared in her classroom.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Michelle pioneered the weekly parent letter which other teachers have adopted. She takes photos of kids at work or play and promptly sends them to parents. She planned a field trip to a nearby nature center for the whole elementary school. She provided fresh flowers from her garden for the new administrator. To silence the screech and bang on tile floors of metal feet of chairs and desks, she encouraged the split tennis balls all classrooms use. She takes notes when her peers brainstorm for decorating the common hallway and comes up with a complete plan. She delegates and does her part well. To group students well takes a knack Michelle has and others emulate. To fully enjoy lighted decorations and projected images, Michelle leads the way in switching off the overhead fixtures.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

She uses good manners herself, never failing to say please and thank you. Most previous students characterize her as "so nice" because she is soft-spoken. At precisely 7:30 AM, she steps into the courtyard to monitor the arrival of all students. Punctual. Preparation. She has all lesson materials at hand. Cleanliness. Classroom areas are clean, orderly, decorated for both form and function. She coaches HS volleyball and demonstrates volunteerism and extra-curricula activity. She's always fair and doesn't show favoritism. Her professionalism reaches the youngest students in our school. Consistency. An

infraction is an infraction and will involve consequences. She engaged the whole class in re-enacting WWII. Leave no one out.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 20**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Paige Tankle

**Position:** Special Education Teacher MDS 3&4 Grade

**School:** Child & Career Development Center

**School District if applicable:**

**County of School:** Chester County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Chris Haldeman

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Classroom PCA

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Bachelor's Degree in Special Education. Currently working on Master's Degree from St. Joseph's Taught Special Education after graduation in South Carolina 2-3 years Currently teaching at Child & Career Development Center in Coatesville PA 2 years 3rd & 4th grade multiple disabilities students

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Teacher holds multiple meetings per school year to ensure all of their student's receive proper transportation to school and assistance with other school related needs.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Teacher prepares lesson plans for their class as well as other mds classrooms in program assuring needs of all students will be met.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Paige has a positive attitude towards any obstacles that she may face. She teaches her student that nothing is impossible. She has a great can do attitude and is always making her students smile regardless of the situation.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 21**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kaitlyn Rodgers

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Monsignor Bonner & Archbishop Prendergast Catholic High School

**School District if applicable:** Archdiocese of Philadelphia

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Matthew Sean McShane

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co-worker

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Kaitlyn teaches English Language Arts and has been doing so for the past 6 to 7 years. Kaitlyn went to an Archdiocese of Philadelphia high school and now works in the same system and gives back by teaching current students of the system. Kaitlyn has taught all grade levels and high school years, but currently teaches 10th grade and 12th grade. She is certified to teach ELA in PA and has completed an APSI training to teach an AP level ELA course to seniors at our school. Kaitlyn also holds a Master's Degree and is currently going for her Doctorate in Education. She is a member of our Senior Girls Retreat team and the Assistant Field Hockey coach.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Kaitlyn stays after school most days to assist students with whatever they need help with. She also gives up her personal time to chaperone every school dance and event we have at school.



**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Kaitlyn heads our faculty's Faculty Coordinating Committee and is very big on open communication between administration and our faculty. She runs the meetings where teachers are allowed to bring up concerns about the school and we discuss possible solutions to them. She is a presence among our staff and is always around to assist with whatever teachers need. She fosters building relationships with her students that are meaningful and supportive.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Kaitlyn is honest and open with her students. She is genuine and real and loves her students more than anything. She talks about her life experiences at the students' ages while we go on the senior retreats.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 22**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** JOanne Doyle

**Position:** 7th grade teacher

**School:** Saint PiusX

**School District if applicable:** Archdiocese of Philadelphia

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Sister Kathleen Touey

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** I am her principal

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Joanne has been teaching for fifty years. She has been recognized by the diocese for her outstanding work with the students as well as the parents. She is a model teacher for her peers and has been recognized for her outstanding work in the field of Science. All of our faculty goes to Joanne for guidance.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Joanne stays after school and uses her free time to make sure every student in her class succeeds. No student ever fails her demanding Science curriculum. The High Schools always comment on how well the students are prepared for being in her class in Middle School.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Joanne has been a school leader in our school community. She headed up our Middle States Team and did an exemplary job including the gifts of all faculty members.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Joanne is a model to her students by reflecting kindness in all aspects of her life. Students and parents look to her for guidance.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 23**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Erin Howell

**Position:** Health and Physical Education Teacher

**School:** Sacred Heart Academy

**School District if applicable:** Archdiocese of Philadelphia

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Eileen Day

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Upper School Director

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Wesley College: BS Physical Education with a concentration in Exercise Physiology

Neumann University: MS Sport Management Eastern University: K-12 Health and Phys

Ed Teacher Certification National Strength and Conditioning Association Certified

American Red Cross Instructor Certified American Red Cross--CPR/AED/First Aid

Certified Self Defense Certified

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Erin took the initiative over the summer to create her own wellness curriculum. She designed one for the upper school students, grades 9 and 10, and then adapted it for our middle school students. (5-8) Not only does Erin teach physical education to lower school students, but she is also responsible for our committee that does all the school spirit activities for the whole school. She runs spirit week, all the pep rallies, and field day for all 12 grades! This year she volunteered to hold a nutrition elective class for upper school students and it has been very successful and popular. Erin also trains girls in CPR and AED use.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Erin has always been a team player, pitching in whenever and wherever necessary. One example of this is that she agreed to take on the role of safety coordinator here at school. That puts her in charge of all drills, and securing the safety of the students and teachers. She has also designed a program to have students help with our after-school program that allows the students to get some experience caring for younger children and it helps the after-school teacher by offering another set of hands. Erin works very closely with our social-emotional counselor and sits in on all our grade level meetings. If a problem arises, she is there to help facilitate. An example of this was we had an issue where some students were vaping in school. Erin found a program to help educate young adults about the dangers of vaping and spoke to the whole upper school. She is more interested in education than discipline, and I really appreciate that approach.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Erin has stepped out of her role as physical education teacher to help plan and supervise the junior prom for a number of years. Erin also volunteers outside of school and recently was awarded the Volunteer of the Year award for her district. Erin devotes her time to her students as well as her community. She represents a dedicated teacher, mother, volunteer, and friend. Her colleagues all know they can turn to her for assistance, advice, and friendship. The students know they can rely on her for advice, and guidance, and look to her as an example of someone who cares for herself and her community by taking care of herself mentally and physically and empowering others to do the same.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 24**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kathy Pedano

**Position:** Early Childhood Coordinator/ Kindergarten teacher

**School:** St. Bernadette School

**School District if applicable:** Archdiocese of Philadelphia

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Joanne Montie

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mrs. Pedano received her Bachelor of Science Degree from Temple University in Early Childhood Education. She received her Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Cabrini College. She has kept current in "best practices" through classes at Immaculata University and the Delaware County Intermediate Unit. She is currently receiving training to receive her Certification in Wilson Reading Instruction. Additionally, she is certified as a Keystone Stars instructor.

Mrs. Pedano has been teaching students in kindergarten for 29 years, all of these years at St. Bernadette School.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mrs. Pedano brings enthusiasm and joy on a daily basis to the students in her care. She meets each child where they are and gently guides them to achieve. In early childhood education, many times teachers are called upon to differentiate between a normal developmental issue vs a more significant issue requiring intensive intervention. Mrs.

Pedano's experience and expertise with kindergarten students provides our Instructional Support Team (IST) with keen insights into a child's development. One case in particular that comes to mind is with a child experiencing significant delays. Mrs. Pedano worked consistently with our school's IST while partnering with the parents to find not only school resources but also community programs for the child. Although the child was not able to stay at our school long term, Mrs. Pedano remains in touch with the family and the student. He is thriving in the appropriate educational setting, in larger part, to the efforts of Mrs. Pedano. This child is just one of the many that Mrs. Pedano has assisted over the years. Her commitment to working with families as we guide them to make sound educational choices for their children is unparalleled.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

As Early Childhood Coordinator at St. Bernadette School, Mrs. Pedano works closely with our early childhood team of teachers and instructional assistants to ensure best practice in the classroom. Her expertise with young students makes her invaluable as we develop and implement active supervision strategies for our students.

Teachers and instructional support teachers view Kathy as an "expert" in child development and often request her input. She readily uses her own prep time to observe a child in another class and offers both practical and supportive feedback. Recently, we had a student with significant behavior issues. Mrs. Pedano was able to observe the child and worked with the younger teacher to create an educational plan that included brain breaks and sensory modifications. She shared the materials that she had gathered through her years to assist the student and the teacher in being successful.

Mrs. Pedano's warmth and humor helps create the climate of our school. Her presence brightens and lightens the classroom, the faculty room and the faculty meeting. She organizes lunch for the teachers on a weekly basis and each year she facilitates our holiday and end of the year parties. She truly is a person of joy and kindness and she is greatly loved and admired by parents, students and colleagues.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Pedano speaks to her students and all students in our school with respect. Her tone is kind and supportive. When giving feedback to a child who requires redirection, she uses language that is direct and focused.

She works to avoid conflicts in the classroom by consistently setting clear expectations and using developmentally appropriate language.

With small or young children come big emotions. When dealing with these emotions, Mrs. Pedano's approach is always to allow children to have their feelings but through patience and her expertise in behavior, she teaches them how to de-escalate. Mrs. Pedano always gives the children in her care the time to process and then resolve issues. This is essential as we work to build in our young learners, practical ways to deal with strong feelings. In today's world, the model of her conflict resolution skills is greatly needed.

Mrs. Pedano has developed and facilitates a "Bernie's Buddies" Program in our school. Our 7th grade students "assist" at lunch with our kindergarten and PreK students. As moderator, she models to our older students how to assist our instructional assistants with the children. She spends time, role playing with them on how to resolve conflicts so the "Bernie's Buddies" are comfortable. The strategies she teaches them assist them with their own peer relationships. She also meets with them on a regular basis to discuss any concerns they may have as they work with our young students.

And finally, each year at our 8th grade graduation, the students always highlight that kindergarten was an amazing year as Mrs. Pedano always had a "smile" and she always made learning "fun".

I believe the best way we model is by our daily interactions and our daily reactions and responses. Mrs. Pedano's humility, generosity and joy-filled spirit each and every day is how she models and how she inspires. The St. Bernadette School community is so greatly blessed by her presence.



## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 25**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Patti Bashaar

**Position:** Math Teacher

**School:** Cardinal O'Hara High School

**School District if applicable:** Archdiocese of Philadelphia

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Eileen Marie Murphy

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mrs. Bashaar has been teaching for over 20 years. She has taught math in both public and private school. Mrs. Bashaar teaches students in grades 9-12 in Geometry and Algebra I and II, but has taught AP Statistics and Statistics as well. She has won several "Teacher of the Quarter" awards and was selected to participate in several professional development programs related to mathematics instruction.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mrs. Bashaar goes above and beyond taking on additional math classes, tutoring, and leading the Student Council, requiring many hours of service outside of class time. She attends all school events in support of the student body. She is constantly asked to write letters of recommendation and is the number one "requested teacher" in our school. The special quality that Mrs. Bashaar possesses is that she notices and brings all student struggles, insecurities or inequities to the attention of administration and finds solutions to provide every student with everything he or she needs to succeed. No one goes hungry on Mrs. Bashaar's watch. Her warm personality helps students who lack

confidence grow in their skills and they all leave her class with a more positive attitude towards math.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Bashaar helps the math team and mentors new teachers every semester. She models excellent instruction, but also offers to observe teachers and provide feedback. She invites others into her room, offers training on programs she uses and shares resources, encouraging her peers to take risks, try new strategies and build stronger relationships with students.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Bashaar always makes time to listen to her students. She challenges them, but finds ways to support them so they know she always has their best interests in mind.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 26**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Larry Schoppet

**Position:** English Teacher

**School:** STEM Academy Chester Upland School District

**School District if applicable:** Chester Upland School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Brendan Bell

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mr. Schoppet is a graduate of Villanova University. He has over 20 years experience in education. He has been a 12th Grade English and AP Literature Teacher at STEM Academy for the past 10 years. Mr. Schoppet re-established the dormant CUSD Hi-Q Program and has led it since 2019.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mr. Schoppet runs a rigorous AP Literature program. Although it is known as one of the most difficult courses offered at our School, it is also one of the most popular among Seniors. Despite the challenge, Students strive to gain admittance to the course and excel in the class.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Schoppet has been a leader in the ELA Department, as well as the 12th Grade Team, and a member of the School Leadership Team. Mr. Schoppet is recognized by his peers as a model of excellence in instruction and professionalism

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Each year, several scholarship providing organizations host our students and a faculty member of their choice for an awards ceremony. Nearly each time, Mr. Schoppet is chosen. The most telling example is during graduation. It seems that each year, our Valedictorian and Salutatorian speakers make note of the influence that Mr. Schoppet has had on their academic career.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 27**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Chassidy King

**Position:** 9-12, Marketing Teacher

**School:** Chester High School

**School District if applicable:** Chester Upland School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Rumahj Mosley

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Marketing Teacher

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**
- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**
- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**
- 4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

## APPLICATION NUMBER: 28

### NOMINEE INFORMATION

**Name:** Kelly Reiner

**Position:** physical education teacher

**School:** Linwood Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Chichester School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### NOMINATED BY

**Your name:** Sandra Polo

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** co worker

### NOMINATION:

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

30 years teaching K-4 Elementary Physical Education Chichester School district graduate too

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

I would like to nominate Kelly Reiner. Kelly is Linwood Elementary's physical education teacher. All day every period she works with all the students at Linwood Elementary School including the students who have special needs.

In addition to our non-disabled students we have students with learning disabilities, physical therapy needs, ADHD, occupational therapy needs, autistic needs, and emotional support disabilities in grades K to 4 who are fully included in the homerooms for physical education class.

She includes everyone despite the variety of differences. In her class she is encouraging and supportive. She modifies, if necessary, but many times in her gym you would not be

able to tell who a student with a disability is. She challenges the students to excel in the gym. She knows how to calm a student with emotion support needs through redirection or praise.

Students are excited to enter the gym to see what Mrs. Reiner planned for that period. Her bulletin boards are engaging, current and relate to the students. What a great way to start a subject! Kelly engages the students physically, yet mentally with problem solving activities. During covid she created game shows for the students to answer trivia questions then do a physical activity based on the answer. She is so creative in her thinking!

Kelly holds students accountable for their actions and discusses actions with the students. She breaks down physical education skills and helps students correct errors – just like I would in Math. Kelly's activities vary and include all students. She has created a bowling alley in her gym. Students work on and compete in cup stacking challenges. She uses scooters and rock wall climbing to get the students moving. During holiday times the gym is set up into stations with different thematic games all of which promote inclusion.

Each year Kelly organizes a Fun Day where the entire student body participates in various games – relay, individual and team, that incorporates all skills and levels. So, a child may not excel in one station, but has the opportunity to at the next.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

In addition to being the physical education teacher, Kelly Reiner is a member of our school PBIS Team and SAP team. She attends behavioral meetings to help support teachers and students who are struggling behaviorally.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

## APPLICATION NUMBER: 29

### NOMINEE INFORMATION

**Name:** Lauren Neuber

**Position:** Fourth Grade Teacher

**School:** Bethel Springs Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Garnet Valley School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### NOMINATED BY

**Your name:** Tara Allen

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal in nominee's elementary school

### NOMINATION:

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Lauren Neuber has been teaching at Bethel Springs Elementary School for twenty years. She has worked as a second grade teacher, reading specialist, special education teacher. Currently, Lauren is a fourth grade teacher. She holds the following certifications Elementary K-6, Special Education N-12 and Reading Specialist K-12. Lauren also co-sponsors Reading Olympics at Bethel Springs for fourth and fifth graders.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Lauren first priority as a teacher is to create a safe, inclusive learning environment where her students are known, respected and can be their true selves. Two years ago, Lauren had a student who felt safe enough to express their sexual identity with her, something they had not yet shared with their family. Lauren handled this delicate knowledge with both care and respect for all involved. She was able to meet with their parents and support a conversation around their child's identity. She worked alongside the counselor to hold a class meeting, allowing this student to express to their peers



how they wished to be referred to as. The acceptance, care and safety that Lauren created for this student, allowed them to flourish.

Last year, there was a student in Lauren's fourth grade class who refused to speak. He communicated with his teachers and peers through gestures and written language. Lauren worked with the school-based team and the family to provide accommodations to the student that allowed him to feel safe and comfortable. While there were challenges along the way, Lauren was able to support this student academically, socially, and emotionally. He participated in morning meetings and classmates willingly made space to meet his needs. In the spring of the year, this student participated in a reader's theater production in front of an audience. Lauren's impact allowed this student to shine.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Lauren has cotaught with peers throughout her career. Most recently, she has cotaught the English/Language Arts block with a special education teacher. This has provided students with an inclusive experience. Lauren's background in special education has allowed her to provide students with differentiated instruction that meets their individual needs. Students learn and grow at their own pace through the careful guidance and intelligent planning of Lauren. She is masterful at developing both meaningful small group instruction and individual instruction with the support of a co-teacher. Throughout her career, Lauren has been dedicated to the curriculum process. She has served as a writer and a reviser throughout her time in Garnet Valley. Most recently, she has devoted her time to the writing and implementation of math workshop structures and the math curriculum. Her work is evident in her classroom and throughout math conversations in our building, as she is the math curriculum coordinator for Bethel Springs Elementary. Through her curriculum work, Lauren collaborated with colleagues. Her vertical knowledge of the math curriculum from kindergarten through fifth grade makes her an asset to our building. Her knowledge of the available resources is extensive and she is a leader with regard to resource knowledge among her teammates. In our building, Lauren's leadership is apparent through team leader responsibilities, LEAP membership, and as participator on the Instructional Impact Team. Her participation in the professional community adds tremendous value to our school. As a team leader, Lauren consistently offers valuable support and mentorship to the fourth-grade team. She welcomes new team members and creates a space for everyone to contribute. While she leads with a wealth of

knowledge, she values the perspectives and expertise of the collective - always moving their work forward together. She actively participated in faculty and team leader meetings, working closely with her team to further district and building initiatives. Her exceptional organizational skills and systematic approach to grade-level meetings led to increased productivity and a boost in team morale, particularly during challenging times. She regularly checks in with her colleagues, facilitating encouraging discussions focused on curriculum development and planning.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Establishing a classroom environment goes beyond meticulous lesson planning and delivery. It is the culmination of numerous factors. Mrs. Neuber's remarkable strength in shaping this environment is her infectious enthusiasm for learning. She wholeheartedly embraces both the process and outcomes of learning, shining brightly with intellectual curiosity. Her genuine excitement for learning, whether her own or her students', radiates through every word and action in the classroom. It's evident that she values the subjects she teaches and aims to instill the same appreciation in her students.

Building a positive classroom culture is deeply rooted in nurturing relationships. Mrs. Neuber actively engages with each student, recognizing their individuality and speaking to them in a manner that respects their unique personalities. She is well-acquainted with their interests, strengths, and challenges. Her relationship with students is a two-way street; she also shares her own thoughts and feelings, recounting her ongoing journey as a learner. Through a series of small gestures, she collectively molds the classroom culture—addressing students as "writers" "readers" or "mathematicians" offering personalized comments that connect each student to the learning process, and coining phrases that become symbolic of the classroom culture.

Lauren sets clear, high expectations for learning and provides well-structured instruction, making the learning goals both worthy and attainable. The culture in her classroom centers around meaningful work that challenges students and equips them with the necessary tools for success. Students can see the direct link between their achievements and the effort they invest in their studies.

A positive classroom culture begins with a sense of safety and belonging. Lauren demonstrates genuine care for her students and treats them with respect and

encouragement. Her explicit and implicit messages convey that this classroom is a safe space for taking risks, where mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth, and learning is celebrated.

When these elements of culture are interwoven, they create a vibrant learning community that benefits students in numerous ways, both in the present and for years to come.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 30**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Emily Gray

**Position:** 2nd grade teacher

**School:** Manoa

**School District if applicable:** Haverford Township School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Renee Mosser

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

This is Emily Gray's 10th year with The School District of Haverford Township and her 8th year teaching Second Grade at Manoa. In her first year with the district, she was an Instructional Assistant at Coopertown Elementary and circulated in their 3 first-grade classrooms, for extra support for the teachers. The following year she was at Coopertown again as an Instructional Assistant in a Third Grade Supplemental Learning Support Classroom. At the end of that school year with 6 weeks left, Emily was hired at Manoa to finish the school year as their Building Sub. Emily's undergraduate certification is Pre-K - 3 from Lock Haven University. Later She received her middle-level certification in 4-8 grade as well as a Masters Degree in Education.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Creating an Inclusive Classroom, is one of Mrs. Gray strengths. One of Mrs. Gray's remarkable qualities is her unwavering commitment to creating an inclusive classroom. She firmly believes that every student, regardless of their background, abilities, or challenges, has the right to a quality education. Recently, she had a student would was

labeled emotional support in her classroom. This students had great difficulties in social situation and always felt like they were being targeted by peers. This student was also very smart. Mrs. Gray worked with this student and established a common language that was short and direct. Emily noticed that when the student got escalated the more an adult spoke, the more upset the student would become. She implemented a soft approach and a calm space for the student so that they could regulate their emotions. She taught him how to use the space and how to ask for help when he was ready to move on. In addition, she continued to challenge the student academically and was able to separate his emotional needs without making his academic needs suffer. This was a fcreative dance with soft spoken words. She shared this information with the student's parents who also implemented the strategies and also noticed their child's behavior change. This students cried a lot during the day. The crying quickly reduced as Mrs. Gray implemented these skills and shared them with the team. She understands the importance of addressing her students' emotional needs without letting the academic skills drop. That is often very hard to do. Mrs. Gray takes the time to listen to her students and offers a compassionate ear to those who may be struggling. Her kindness and empathy create a safe space where students can open up about their fears and move to success.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Gray has volunteered her own time over the summer to train and develop her skills in Responsive Classroom (R.C.) not only so she can support her students but also so she can support her colleagues and peers as she serves as our School's Responsive Classroom Ambassador. Emily promotes R.C. skills throughout our school in a simple way which doesn't overwhelm staff with one more thing to do. Each month Emily showcases a Responsive Classroom technique to our faculty by doing an energizer to start our faculty meetings or a closing circle to end an early morning committee meeting. She has demonstrated the effectiveness of the implementation of "quiet time" before a transition with her students. Students in her classroom take responsibility when she implements logical consequences when students have difficulties making smart choices. All of these skills help her support her colleagues understand the effectiveness of R. C. practices as she tells stories of successes and "flops" with staff when trying something new. Emily is realistic and respects her colleague's time. She listens to what they need and supports her team with small changes that offer best practices and lasting results. As her peers hear about the challenges and successes, Emily's vulnerability offers a safe environment for questions,

where staff can stretch their thinking with new ideas, so that these practices can stick day after day. Emily has a calm and welcoming demeanor that makes others trust her. She is quick to listen and asks questions that provoke a different point of view.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Gray is a teacher who redefines education. Mrs. Emily Gray is the epitome of dedication and innovation in the field of education. She has made it her life's mission to not just teach but to inspire and transform the lives of her students. Her classroom is not just a space for academic learning; it's a safe haven where students of all backgrounds feel valued and respected. Her data show that she has a mixed group of levels that are fair below grade level. Yet, you would never know that if you walked into her classroom. She challenges her lower kids with higher-level thinking by asking notice/wonder questions. This approach allows all students to enter the information at the same point. Mrs. Gray is a storyteller and uses stories about herself and her children to help her students understand that it is okay to struggle at times. During an observation, Mrs. Gray noticed a student continually calling out and moving in their seat so much that they fell to the floor. With an effortless approach, Mrs. Gray tailored her teaching methods to cater to this diverse learning style. She showed this student a visual and then had them repeat back to her what the visual was asking them to do. Finally, she asked the student to act out his answer through movement to ensure he understood the content. When Mrs. Gray and I spoke after the observation she stated she made adjustments to his instruction to add movement so that he was able to focus and move around the room safely. Mrs. Gray will not give up on students and she will ensure that all material is accessible to all of her students.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 31**

*Application 1 of 3 for Kelly Purificato*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kelly Purificato

**Position:** Speech Teacher

**School:** Interboro High School

**School District if applicable:** Interboro School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Ari Bleicher-Nugent

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co-worker

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Kelly Purificato has taught at Interboro High school for the past 3 years, prior to Interboro she worked at Toby Farms Intermediate school providing group and individual support. She has been an asset to the school and the children. She goes above and beyond on a daily basis. She continues to advocate for all of her students.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Kelly Purificato exemplifies what being a teacher is all about. She is a constant role model for all students and staff. Mrs. Purificato actively advocates for her students. She has successfully help multiple students and families gain support for helping to purchase communication devices and provides voice and support for those in need. The Life Skill students participate in weekly lessons with her and she has had such a huge impact on the students. She is not afraid to stick up for her students and always puts them first.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

During Life skills Mrs. Purificato ran a small group lesson with students using AAC devices. She was able to have all students actively participate in the activity. Since working with them on the devices they can easily communicate with all students and staff. Mrs. Purificato has helped program items such as Bucs brew house, popcorn sales, soft pretzel sales and personal information. She has taught the students to independently use their communication devices when needed. She further is a constant positive role model and advocates for their daily needs. Always willing to work with students and families and happy to provide support whenever needed. I'm honored to work with her.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Purificato is the definition of Buc pride here at Interboro. She actively helps all students and always has a smile on her face. She continues to provide daily support and is not afraid to stick up for her students and advocate for them. In a recent trip she worked with the class to provide support while out in the community. She helped students with communication needs and again continues on a daily basis to be a role model for all. She beyond deserves to earn this award and I'm happy to nominate and acknowledge all of her hard work daily!



**APPLICATION NUMBER: 32**

*Application 2 of 3 for Kelly Purificato*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kelly Purificato

**Position:** Speech Teacher

**School:** Interboro High School/Glenolden

**School District if applicable:** Interboro School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Kathryn Sherlock

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** co-worker

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Kelly has been our speech teacher for 3 years at Interboro High School. Before that she was a speech teacher at Toby Farms. She has her masters in speech and language.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Kelly has worked diligently to make sure all students have the proper form of communication. She has fought with insurance companies to get speech generated devices approved and fixed when needed. She works with our students in real life situations and making sure they can communicate to familiar and unfamiliar people.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Kelly works within our classroom with us to help make our kids a functional part of our daily activities. A big part of our class activities includes communicating to customers and Kelly works with the students individually and in groups to make sure they are an

integral part of those activities. Kelly makes sure the students feel comfortable using their voices or their SGD's and helps them advocate for themselves and what they prefer to use.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Kelly makes sure to make herself a presence in our classroom. She doesn't just pull kids and work with them in a room. She comes with us when we go into the community and helps the kids order food independently. She teaches our assistants how to guide students instead of doing things for them.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 33**

*Application 3 of 3 for Kelly Purificato*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kelly Purificato

**Position:** Speech and Language Pathologist

**School:** Interboro High School

**School District if applicable:** Interboro School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Gabrielle Perry

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co-worker

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Kelly has been working as a Speech and Language Pathologist in schools for 6 years, she has been working at Interboro for the past 3 years. She received her undergraduate degree from West Chester University, her Masters degree from Towson University and is currently a certified as a SPL. Kelly current works within the high school, working with students in all four grades, as well as the community schools that are grades K-12.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Kelly works with her students to make sure they are able to communicate their wants and needs. She works closely with the Life Skills students at the high school. There are have been multiple cases where Kelly has worked to ensure students have received the correct communication device they need on a daily basis. Without this communication device the student may not be able to communicate needs or have trouble doing so. Kelly also works with the Life Skill students at the coffee house, where they make, collect orders, and sell coffee to staff and students. She will work directly with the

students so they can communicate and complete the job they are assigned to do. There is no event or outing that Kelly will no clear her schedule to be at if it means supporting her students.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Kelly works directly with the two teachers who work with the Life Skill students. She ensures that the lessons she works on with the students will correspond to scenarios they will experience in the real world or at school, as well as lessons that are happening inside their classroom. Kelly, wants what is best for her students so she works as closely to other staff to be sure that her students are successful.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Kelly is a role model to all of her students. She encourages her students to communicate and be the best versions of themselves inside and outside of the school. She brings such a positive attitude towards all her students and will not stop until they feel successful. Interboro is lucky to have someone as dedicated as her!

## APPLICATION NUMBER: 34

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Elizabeth Becker

**Position:** Math teacher

**School:** Norwood

**School District if applicable:** Interboro School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Michelle Fitzgerald

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Special ed and math 6th grade 17 years

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Beth is the "mom" to the middle school, she is all sugar and spice and also firm, but fair. She builds relationships with her students that last a lifetime. They know she will go to bat for them, defend them, but also hold them to a standard of goodness and kindness.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Beth makes math fun. She incorporates projects and practical aspects of mathematics. She does an architectural gingerbread house extravaganza. Students make diagrams, do calculations and then build their houses. She also infuses STEM activities into her class wherever possible.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Beth is involved in every aspect of student life. She supports athletes by attending sporting events, she chaperones everything, is a member of the PBIS team and is integral in planning and creating activities for our students. She was a sponsor of clubs and was the head of No Place for Hate.

## APPLICATION NUMBER: 35

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** John Conte

**Position:** Physics Teacher

**School:** Interboro High School

**School District if applicable:** Interboro School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** George Hassel

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague, we both graduated from Interboro and Widener in different years

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mr. John Conte has taught at Interboro High School since 2010, primarily teaching AP Physics for junior and senior level students and integrated science for ninth grade students. Mr. Conte is a 2009 Widener University graduate, where he received his B.S.Ed in Physics Education with teaching certifications in Physics, Earth Science, and Mathematics, and also minors in Astronomy, Environmental Science, and Mathematics for a total of 170 credit hours. During this time, he worked as a tutor in the Math Tutoring Center and assisted at Widener Observatory. Mr. Conte also participated in an ongoing research project with Professor Harry Augensen at Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona. Mr. Conte worked numerous jobs to support himself. He worked several hours a week at a local pizza restaurant and gave private tutoring sessions to local high school and college students. Mr. Conte's mother, a widow, also worked several jobs and did her best to support him financially. Fortunately, in his senior year, Mr. Conte was selected as the recipient of the Henry T. and Dorothy S. Feige Scholarship in Environmental Science, a substantial monetary award which allowed him to devote his senior year in college almost exclusively to academics. Mr. Conte received his M.Ed in Secondary Education from Cabrini University where he focused his research on

teaching methodologies which included exploring the effects that spending time on homework had on student success in physics and whether a flipped classroom technique would be a better alternative in that classroom to help those students who were struggling to succeed. Mr. Conte later completed his 2nd Master's degree through Texas A&M University in Physics. Mr. Conte is highly regarded at IHS for excellence in teaching. Additionally, since 2012 he has taught a variety of classes during the evening and summer as an adjunct professor for Widener's Department of Physics & Astronomy. Mr. Conte is regarded as one of Widener's most reliable and effective adjunct instructors. A number of his former students have expressed their gratitude for his clear, thorough teaching style and also for his unwavering concern for their education.

**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Physics courses often have a reputation as prohibitively difficult, causing some students to enter the course with a bias that they will not understand the topic. Worse yet, this causes other students to never consider taking the course. Mr. Conte combats this challenge in a variety of ways.

Mr. Conte has an infectious enthusiasm for the topic, and he genuinely wants others to be as excited about physics as he is. He devotes a considerable amount of time as advisor to the Physics Olympics team at Interboro. He maintains a friendly and approachable demeanor, and helps to chaperone many Interboro sporting events and proms. His presence in the classroom and outside it help to assure students that he is there for them.

Beyond his teaching duties at Widener, Mr. Conte also devotes considerable time promoting and running observatory events. In contrast with physics, astronomy is often considered to be a "gateway" science that can spark interest across a broader range of people. His strong relationship with Widener helps to forge a real pathway for students to begin to experience the next steps in their journey after high school. Following their graduation from Interboro, a number of Mr. Conte's former students have enrolled at Widener in a variety of majors. One in particular recently (2020) graduated from Widener with a major in Environmental Science, then went on to pursue a PhD in environmental science at St. Joseph's University.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**



Mr. Conte maintains a very welcoming classroom, and an active approach to teaching physics. His interest in astronomy is very clear in his classroom. He emphasizes astronomy outreach, and since 2009, has been a faithful (initially unpaid) assistant to the observatory director for the evening stargazing events that are held regularly each month during the academic year. On clear nights, Mr. Conte leads the session by providing a brief description of each celestial body that is being viewed through the telescope eyepiece. Examples of such objects include the Moon, terrestrial planets Mercury, Venus, and Mars, gas-giant planets Saturn and Jupiter, double stars, star clusters, and nebulae. Mr. Conte provides the visitors as much detailed scientific information regarding these objects as can be accomplished in an hour. The audience typically includes, in addition to the usual members of the general public and Widener students, many of Mr. Conte's own Interboro students. On those nights when the sky is cloudy, Mr. Conte provides the visitors with a short classroom presentation prior to a brief tour of the observatory dome. Whether the sky is clear or cloudy, Mr. Conte's positive, informative, and cordial interactions with the attendees at those events have over the past few years been much appreciated by the public attendees. In addition to the public stargazing events, Mr. Conte assists in organizing and running dedicated Teachers' Stargazing nights at the Widener Observatory, where local K-12 teachers can bring their own family members to the observatory. Teachers' Stargazing events are scheduled twice a year, once in the fall (November) and again in the spring (March) to view the diverse assortment of celestial objects which are available over the course of an academic year.

On top of all this, Mr. Conte always schedules two dedicated stargazing nights, one in fall and the other in spring, at the Widener Observatory specifically for his Interboro students.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Conte is very knowledgeable and passionate about his subjects, and very clearly demonstrates his support for Interboro students. He gives much of his time outside of the classroom to further support students and to provide opportunities for them. The most impressive aspect of Mr. Conte's career, and what sets him apart in my mind, is that he could have left the community and taken his talents elsewhere. I believe that he would be a successful teacher and researcher anywhere that he chose to go. However, he returned to his alma mater and maintains a strong local connection with

Widener. He puts forth every measure of effort to ensure the best for his school and community, and has truly embodied the term "Excellence and Buc Pride".

Mr. Conte has amply demonstrated his teaching acumen at Interboro HS and also his ability to educate the broader adult population in his evening/summer classes at Widener University, and as well as people of all ages from the local community at the Widener Observatory stargazing nights. I believe that he is very deserving of the grant, and that he will put it to excellent use to further improve the student experience.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 36**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kathryn Garvin

**Position:** Special Ed Teacher

**School:** Interboro High School

**School District if applicable:** Interboro School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Kimberly Ann Hibbs

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Parent of student

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Ms. Katie Garvin teaches life skills at Interboro High School and has been with my son the past 4 years. We couldn't have gotten through HS without her guidance, patience and skills to teach special education students. Mrs Garvin is a rare find and I hope she gets the attention and appreciation she well deserves.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Ms Garvin has gone above and beyond to help my son prepare for life after high school, including enrollment into a dual college program at Delaware County Community College.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms Garvin works with me and my child on his IEP, updates, new progress reports, new goals and goals for after high school. Ms Garvin is there every step of the way

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

All the kids look up to Ms Garvin. She is patient, funny, kind and loves candy. What kid doesn't relate to that??!!

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 37**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Colleen Grinkiewicz

**Position:** 3rd grade teacher

**School:** Russell Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Marple Newtown School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Brett Thomas

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Colleen has been teaching for over 20 years. She is a 3rd grade teacher, who is a team leader, instructional leader, and dedicated professional.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

In my brief time here, I have been able to lean on Colleen for her insight, her selfless approach to teaching, her ability to build relationships and trust with the families she works with, and her excellent communication. She is willing to take on any challenge and handle it with grace.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Colleen has taken on a new teacher as a mentor this year. I could not ask for a more inclusive employee. Colleen volunteers to join committees, attends school events and is the first to volunteer when I need someone.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Colleen is a role model in her positivity, her approach to her job, and her caring and kind ways.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 38**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Eileen Doyle

**Position:** Science Teacher

**School:** Paxon Hollow Middle School

**School District if applicable:** Marple Newtown School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Thomas Gretchen

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague / I am the principal at PHMS

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Eileen Doyle has been a teacher, a coach, and a mentor at PHMS for over a quarter of a century. She is one of the most patient and caring science teachers you have ever met. Eileen quietly does a lot behind the scenes at PHMS. She is not one who ever seeks attention or awards, however she is involved in our athletic program, she runs our Renaissance program, and is instrumental in helping with our coveted Potter Cup Fundraiser, which has accumulated over \$500,000 in donations since its inception in 2004.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mrs. Doyle is one of the first teachers to arrive and is one of the last teachers to leave Paxon Hollow each day. On a routine basis she will stay several hours after school to help a student or a colleague who needs assistance. She does not stop there. Mrs. Doyle is the type of person who has been observed walking out to her car only to see a student waiting by themselves. Mrs. Doyle will put down her belongings and stand with the child until an adult picks them up from school.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

From Karen Shoemaker, one of Eileen's Colleagues:

I have worked with Eileen in 8th grade for three years. When I first moved from 7th to 8th grade, Eileen was the first one to make sure I had a smooth transition. She was willing to help me with whatever I needed. She was also super helpful in helping me transition into the team leader position on the opposite team. She is one of the kindest people I have ever met. This year, I am teaching 8th grade science with her. During this first month of school, I have already learned so much from being in her classroom. Her organization and classroom management skills are impeccable. Her relationship with the students is one of a caring and respectful nature. It is evident they respect her and want to perform well in her class. Eileen is a wonderful leader for our 8th grade team, and I have really enjoyed working with her. She is a true teacher of Excellence! From Colleague, Michele Lunn:

There is so much to admire about Eileen Doyle. She is dedicated to her profession and is willing to go above and beyond for the success of her students. Her effectiveness as a science teacher is beyond compare. Regardless of how busy Eileen is, she is always willing to help a colleague as well as students.

Beyond her success in the classroom, Eileen is a team leader, an organizer of the renaissance program and one of the main organizers of the Potter Cup. Eileen is a valuable asset to our school. She truly represents a teacher of excellence.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Eileen used to be a field hockey coach at Paxon Hollow. One season, her team was one win away from having an undefeated season. When teams have an undefeated season at PHMS, they are remembered with a banner that gets hung in our gymnasium.

Unfortunately, Eileen's team lost the final game of the field hockey season, but Mrs. Doyle's team received something much more important than a banner. Mrs. Doyle taught them that character is much more important than an undefeated season. The idea clearly got through to her team. A week after the loss, a member of the field hockey team presented Mrs. Doyle with a banner that states, "Thank you for teaching us



that character is more important than an undefeated season". The banner still hangs in Mrs. Doyle's science room!

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 39**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Jaime Reilly

**Position:** Kindergarten Teacher

**School:** Culbertson Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Marple Newtown School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** James M. Wigo, Jr.

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

When you hear the words dedicated, committed, selfless, team player, positive, calm, resilient, cooperative, appreciative, respectful and most of all patient, we at Culbertson automatically think of our Kindergarten teacher Jaime Reilly. This year, Jaime has been selected by her peers as Culbertson's Teacher of Excellence.

Jaime Reilly has been a Kindergarten teacher at Culbertson for the past 22 years. During Jaime's tenure she has taught hundreds of students the fundamentals of reading and math. In addition to academics, she has taught those same students how to tie their shoes, zip up their jackets and pack and unpack their school bags. As we know, all of these tasks are monumental in the development of a child.

During her 20 plus years of working in the Marple Newtown School District, Jaime has had many teachers on her team come and go. Regardless of who the teacher is or was, Jaime has always maintained a collaborative work environment. All of the teachers have spoken very highly of Jaime and her willingness to advocate what is best for all of her students.

One of Jaime's strongest qualities as a teacher of kindergarten students, is her ability to

"Build Relationships" with her students. Jaime's students have noticed her at many of our school events where she is not required to be a teacher. She connects with her students in a way where she makes them feel comfortable to approach her.

Overall Culbertson Elementary School is very fortunate to have Jaime Reilly as a Kindergarten teacher for the past 20 plus years. Her dedication, commitment and positive energy are what makes her kindergarten class such a warm and welcoming environment for her students to learn.

**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

When you hear the words dedicated, committed, selfless, team player, positive, calm, resilient, cooperative, appreciative, respectful and most of all patient, we at Culbertson automatically think of our Kindergarten teacher Jaime Reilly. This year, Jaime has been selected by her peers as Culbertson's Teacher of Excellence.

Jaime Reilly has been a Kindergarten teacher at Culbertson for the past 22 years. During Jaime's tenure she has taught hundreds of students the fundamentals of reading and math. In addition to academics, she has taught those same students how to tie their shoes, zip up their jackets and pack and unpack their school bags. As we know, all of these tasks are monumental in the development of a child.

During her 20 plus years of working in the Marple Newtown School District, Jaime has had many teachers on her team come and go. Regardless of who the teacher is or was, Jaime has always maintained a collaborative work environment. All of the teachers have spoken very highly of Jaime and her willingness to advocate what is best for all of her students.

One of Jaime's strongest qualities as a teacher of kindergarten students, is her ability to "Build Relationships" with her students. Jaime's students have noticed her at many of our school events where she is not required to be a teacher. She connects with her students in a way where she makes them feel comfortable to approach her.

Overall Culbertson Elementary School is very fortunate to have Jaime Reilly as a Kindergarten teacher for the past 20 plus years. Her dedication, commitment and positive energy are what makes her kindergarten class such a warm and welcoming environment for her students to learn.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

When you hear the words dedicated, committed, selfless, team player, positive, calm, resilient, cooperative, appreciative, respectful and most of all patient, we at Culbertson automatically think of our Kindergarten teacher Jaime Reilly. This year, Jaime has been selected by her peers as Culbertson's Teacher of Excellence.

Jaime Reilly has been a Kindergarten teacher at Culbertson for the past 22 years. During Jaime's tenure she has taught hundreds of students the fundamentals of reading and math. In addition to academics, she has taught those same students how to tie their shoes, zip up their jackets and pack and unpack their school bags. As we know, all of these tasks are monumental in the development of a child.

During her 20 plus years of working in the Marple Newtown School District, Jaime has had many teachers on her team come and go. Regardless of who the teacher is or was, Jaime has always maintained a collaborative work environment. All of the teachers have spoken very highly of Jaime and her willingness to advocate what is best for all of her students.

One of Jaime's strongest qualities as a teacher of kindergarten students, is her ability to "Build Relationships" with her students. Jaime's students have noticed her at many of our school events where she is not required to be a teacher. She connects with her students in a way where she makes them feel comfortable to approach her.

Overall Culbertson Elementary School is very fortunate to have Jaime Reilly as a Kindergarten teacher for the past 20 plus years. Her dedication, commitment and positive energy are what makes her kindergarten class such a warm and welcoming environment for her students to learn.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

When you hear the words dedicated, committed, selfless, team player, positive, calm, resilient, cooperative, appreciative, respectful and most of all patient, we at Culbertson automatically think of our Kindergarten teacher Jaime Reilly. This year, Jaime has been selected by her peers as Culbertson's Teacher of Excellence.

Jaime Reilly has been a Kindergarten teacher at Culbertson for the past 22 years. During Jaime's tenure she has taught hundreds of students the fundamentals of reading and math. In addition to academics, she has taught those same students how to tie their shoes, zip up their jackets and pack and unpack their school bags. As we know, all of these tasks are monumental in the development of a child.

During her 20 plus years of working in the Marple Newtown School District, Jaime has had many teachers on her team come and go. Regardless of who the teacher is or was, Jaime has always maintained a collaborative work environment. All of the teachers have spoken very highly of Jaime and her willingness to advocate what is best for all of her students.

One of Jaime's strongest qualities as a teacher of kindergarten students, is her ability to "Build Relationships" with her students. Jaime's students have noticed her at many of our school events where she is not required to be a teacher. She connects with her students in a way where she makes them feel comfortable to approach her.

Overall Culbertson Elementary School is very fortunate to have Jaime Reilly as a Kindergarten teacher for the past 20 plus years. Her dedication, commitment and positive energy are what makes her kindergarten class such a warm and welcoming environment for her students to learn.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 40**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Jena Foley

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Loomis Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Marple Newtown School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Jaime Smyth

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Immediate Supervisor

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Jena Foley has been teaching for about 12 years. She has taught kindergarten to fifth grade depending on the year. She has an elementary education certification with an endorsement in social-emotional and behavioral wellness. She currently teaches fifth-grade level math and enriched math to 90 fifth-graders. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Mrs. Foley is on several district-level committees to support teachers across the district. We value her work and trust her judgment.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

When someone first walks into Jena Foley's classroom, they may think the teacher is missing. They may think she's hard to spot because of her petite stature and short height. Perhaps they think it's hard to spot her because many of the students in her fifth-grade class are taller than her. But, it is truly because she is ALWAYS right next to her students - on the floor, next to their desk, sitting at a table just beside them. She blends right in! She adores her students every year and always refers to them as her kids. And, we aren't talking about a class of 25. She loves all 70-100 of her fifth-grade

students as if they are her own. Mrs. Foley has invited me into her class so she could shine a positive light on a student, to show me something the kids have created (and brag about their effort and creativity), to ask me to team teach improper fractions with her... but my favorite is when I get to watch her perform one of her math songs. She grabs her cell phone and asks me to record. She then grabs her microphone, and with the words on the board, begins to sing... about MATH. It's always a new song that she wrote by herself about math facts or problem-solving - and always to the latest and greatest performer's melody. Mrs. Foley is always in tune (literally and figuratively) with the kids and what they love. Right now, her class is in their Taylor Swift and Travis Kelse Era. So, of course, the duo is team-teaching with Mrs. Foley. Taylor and Travis are often spotted on the SmartBoard, presenting problems or reminding students to look for the mistake. She loves finding mistakes with her class because mistakes are opportunities to learn and grow! Watching Mrs. Foley teach is truly magical. She always finds a way to get to know each child and connect her lessons and examples to their likes. She draws them in with her fun personality and then holds them captive by creating interesting lessons.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Jena Foley is student and student-data driven. You would think this would be a no-brainer in education but, not every teacher is completely dedicated to having EACH and EVERY one of their students succeed. Mrs. Foley not only wants her students to do well but also plans and over plans to create engaging, meaningful, targeted, student-focused lessons at each child's level so she can meet them where they are and pull them up. Because Mrs. Foley is so good at differentiating her instruction, she loves to team teach with the learning support teacher and the gifted support teacher. This is no small feat! In addition, Mrs. Foley is an important member of the fifth-grade team where her grade partners just adore her happy personality and on-going energy. When Mrs. Foley is spotted in the hallways she is always smiling. She has a pep in her step and genuinely makes you feel like she is so happy and excited to see you! Mrs. Foley is always willing to lend a hand - to anyone and everyone on campus, teach a Math 24-Club, and even help a child in a younger grade who may be struggling emotionally in a different class (this greatly helps their teacher). She treats our assistants and families with kindness and dignity. She is also a prankster, an author, and a mother. I often wish I could clone her and place Mrs. Foley in each grade level around our school because every child deserves a champion who truly cares about their education, struggles, success, and

emotional well-being. And, every teacher deserves a grade partner that is dedicated to helping kids and teachers succeed.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Foley is a wonderful role model to her students as well as the staff. She sees the best in everyone and children notice that. Then, they begin to see the best in others, and perhaps give others the benefit of the doubt. We are a Title I school so our students come from a giant mix of poverty and wealth. However, one-third of our students are at or below the poverty line. Mrs. Foley ensures each child (and their family) is treated with dignity. She ensures that everyone has what they need to be included in field trips and feel confident at graduation. Students learn what they live. She creates a family environment where each child is accepted for who they are and they can be themselves. One year, we had a student who came from another country and didn't speak English. (This is not uncommon at Loomis.) However, Mrs. Foley was concerned with this child's lack of meaningful progress. So, Mrs. Foley asked me if her own mother could come to school to tutor the child (for free) so the student could learn the English language a little faster before sending them to middle school. How do you say no to Mrs. Foley? You don't - because you know she is losing sleep over the child and you need her well-rested for all the things she wants to accomplish in a day. Students in her class began volunteering to help their peer with flash cards, cheering for each victory! Did I mention Mrs. Foley teaches math by partnering with a local pet shelter? Students have to figure out real-life solutions to help their designated (real-life) shelter animal by determining the financial need to take care of a pet in and out of the shelter. Just another way she models empathy. To watch Mrs. Foley teach and engage with students is absolutely magical. Just ask those of us who had the pleasure of watching her teach!



## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 41**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Lauren Kobylarz

**Position:** K-2 Special Education Teacher

**School:** Worrall Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Marple Newtown School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Stephanie Sturdivant

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** I am her supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mrs. Kobylarz is an amazing asset to the Worrall community! She creates such a loving and accepting environment for students newly identified as in need of Special Education services in grades K-2. Her individualized approach effects tremendous growth for students, helping to instill a sense of pride and accomplishment for every one of her students. Mrs. Kobylarz is an active collaborator with her General Education colleagues, ensuring that students are supported in all environments. Her Wilson Certification, in-depth expertise, and loving heart all thoroughly benefit the students under her care.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mrs. Kobylarz is a wonder at making sure every individual student gets exactly what he/she needs. There are countless examples where she has scheduled her support groups down to the minute to maximize her time with students, often finding time to see students above their minimum mandated IEP time to provide even more support. Her application of best practices and targeted intervention routinely helps students

make significant leaps in achievement, closing the gap for our youngest learners who need her.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Kobylarz is a tireless advocate for her students. This means she is in constant communication with her general education colleagues to ensure they are doing the very best for every student. She ensures all teachers understand and follow student accommodations, and she makes teachers and administration active participants in the IEP process.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Kobylarz is the epitome of a growth mindset. She shows her students that it's Ok to make mistakes, and that mistakes help you learn and grow. She instills such confidence in her students, treating each kindly and modeling collaboration for her students. Students rise to her expectations because she believes in them, and she helps them believe in themselves. Her positivity and advocacy are bright lights for each student.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 42**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Shannon Blessington

**Position:** Computer and Mathematics Teacher

**School:** Marple Newtown High School

**School District if applicable:** Marple Newtown School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Christian Jaspersen

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mrs. Blessington presents as an excellent candidate for the Franklin Mint Credit Union Excellence in Teaching Award. During the previous six years, I have worked as her co-supervising administrator. Mrs. Blessington demonstrates the attributes of an experienced teacher in myriad facets while attending to students enrolled in her courses: AP Computer Science A, AP Computer Science Principles, and Algebra II. These courses spread across four grade levels-9, 10, 11, and 12.

As a Google Certified Educator, Mrs. Blessington provides her students with the skills and tools needed in a virtual environment.

Utilizing a Google Classroom environment can be daunting to many teachers as they adapt to a paperless classroom. Equally challenging can be attempting to provide requisite tutorial instruction for students who lack exposure to a virtual environment. However, Mrs. Blessington employs instructional techniques fostering rapid learning acquisition. Differentiated instruction pervades her lessons as she responds to students' needs based on targeted formative assessments. Afterward, she uses data collected to identify and diagnose students' learning gaps, particularly in the areas of mathematic computation and calculation. Employing these strategies has shown documented success in our students' AP Exam scores for AP Computer Science Principles.

**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Earlier in my administrative tenure, I faced the challenge of identifying enthusiastic and engaging teachers willing to spend countless unpaid hours coordinating Mini-THON with members of the administrative team. I immediately turned to Mrs. Blessington among others for assistance. She did not hesitate to immerse herself in the expansive project. Given the abbreviated timeline with which we had to work, Mrs. Blessington co-assembled a team of teachers and student leaders and identified a fundraising goal of \$10,000.00. Within five short months, Mrs. Blessington and her team raised more than \$21,000.00 toward childhood cancer research, essentially doubling their initial goal. The philanthropic initiative erupted with immeasurable fanfare as its cumulative total has eclipsed \$245,000.00. The latter demonstrates Mrs. Blessington's citizenship, dedication, and leadership within and beyond our high school community.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Utilizing a Google and Schoology Classroom environment can be daunting to many teachers as they adapt to a paperless classroom. Equally challenging can be attempting to provide requisite tutorial instruction for students who lack exposure to a virtual environment. Mrs. Blessington recognizes these challenges and often volunteers to facilitate professional development workshops focused on implementing a virtual classroom environment. She demonstrates effective use of our technological classroom resources, including computer applications, Google tools, interactive boards, and Schoology, and assists peers well after these workshops conclude.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Whether Mrs. Blessington is assisting peers with technological challenges, facilitating data workshops, or leading students in their philanthropic mission toward ending childhood cancer, her citizenship and dedication serve as a model for all members of our school community and beyond.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 43**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Gabby Trofa

**Position:** 3rd Grade

**School:** Pennell Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Penn Delco School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Megan Ritacco

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Parent of a student

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Ms. Gabby Trofa is a 3rd grade teacher at Pennell Elementary. She brings to the classroom 10 years experience teaching, with 7 of those years being in 3rd grade at Pennell. She earned both her Bachelors and Masters Degrees from West Chester University, and is currently taking additional graduate courses at Immaculata to further enhance her teaching education.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Arguably, few teachers are as connected to their students as deeply as Miss Trofa is. This connection can be seen by students and their families when she attends sporting events that her students are playing in, or when she is coaching those sports herself. The connection can be felt by the students when she has a surprise lunch with a few of them, or when she is working her magic during small group instruction. One of the most meaningful ways Miss Trofa connects with her students is by leading an after school program titled Girls On The Run. The program focuses on challenging young girls to become the best version of themselves through an active and health conscious lifestyle.

Because of her ability to connect with her students, often times they go to her when they need someone to confide in. Maybe they need extra help in a subject and are afraid to make that known during class time. Or perhaps they are experiencing peer to peer conflict and need help resolving it. Past and present students know they are always welcome in her classroom, and that she will always listen without judgement.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Because of all of Miss Trofa's continuing education, something she excels greatly in is the use of technology in the classroom. She is an invaluable resource to her peers when it comes to navigating today's technology and integrating it in to daily lessons. Miss Trofa not only supports her fellow 3rd Grade teachers, but she also works hand in hand with the 2nd Grade team, guiding them on how to prepare their students for 3rd grade. She is mentoring a new teacher in the district this year, and in addition to that has volunteered to mentor a college student aspiring to be an educator herself. The student observes Miss Trofa, and then teaches a few lessons to the class on her own- all inspired by Miss Trofa.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Miss Trofa is a leader in the school wide behavior program, PBIS, constantly coming up with new ways to reaffirm behavior expectations at school. She plans and executes terrific assemblies where students learn and are rewarded for surpassing behavior expectations. She also leads the Pennell Pride Team, which is a group of students that come together monthly to discuss and plan new ways of how they can best show pride in their school and community. Perhaps her strongest attribute, though, is leading by example. Her relationships with other faculty members demonstrate respect. While her relationship with her students is that of integrity and trust. Her daily actions show students how to be a good friend, and how to be a respectful peer. Because of this, she is widely respected and admired by our entire school community.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 44**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Joseph Jones

**Position:** Math Teacher

**School:** Sun Valley High School

**School District if applicable:** Penn Delco School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** John Paul Roskos

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mr. Jones is a former superintendent who has decided to take on the role as a classroom teacher in an area of high need. His resume is extensive but it is the dedication he has to the art of teaching that makes this nomination powerful.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mr. Jones teaches math but he has spent the year teaching students so much more. Each and every one of his classes begins with a restorative practice circle where students feel comfortable being themselves and getting to know each other. This process does not take much time out of his math class but makes a significant impact on his ability to maximize the class's effectiveness.

Mr. Jones teaches many of our students who have difficulty with math and because of his ability to strongly differentiate, he has them bought into coming everyday willing to be vulnerable in a learning environment. Students embrace his wisdom from not just

the content but everyday practical matters. All students know you can go to Mr. Jones for a piece of advice.

He has been with us here at Sun Valley for just a year and as his evaluating supervisor I can say he has been instrumental in growing a strong culture of teaching and learning. We look forward to him continuing to work towards improving our math curriculum and our instructional practices in which he has a ton of knowledge.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Jones has spent many hours over the summer working with other teachers to write a new curriculum for a math course focused around real life skills like financial literacy.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Jones teaches some of the students who need a trusting adult the most. He is able to maximize every moment he has with them because of the wisdom he is able to utilize as his advantage.



## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 45**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Susan Weber

**Position:** 5th Grade Teacher

**School:** Aston Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Penn Delco School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Sue Phillips

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal/Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Ms. Susan Weber has been teaching fifth grade for over 20 years at the Penn Delco School District. She is like the mayor of the town of Aston - students, parents, families love her. She cannot go anywhere with out someone recognizing her and wanting to talk with her and she always takes time to talk with these former students and their families.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Ms. Weber is the fifth grade teacher every student wants to get and every parent requests. She is down to earth, positive, and she holds students accountable for getting their work done as well as for the way they treat other psople..She helps bridge the gap between elementary school and middle school by providing a kind of "tough love" for both students and parents. She takes time to get to know the students and their interests. She builds relationships with them and she often attends their sporting events and activities on her own time. Ms. Weber also pushes her students to be the best they can be both in and out of the classroom.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Weber supports other teachers and staff members on a regular basis. She listens to her colleagues when they are struggling and helps them find solutions to problems. She supports new teachers with her experience providing lessons to fifth grade students, shares new ideas with all staff members, and she teaches anyone who will listen the importance of building relationships. Often teachers miss this piece. Ms. Weber constantly reminds them of the importance of relationships building and how once your students trust you, they will do almost anything for you, including putting time on tough assignments and working hard to do well on tests.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Weber is a role model to her students because she leads by example. She does not ask them to do anything she wouldn't do. She shows the students her own struggle with learning or with appropriate life experiences so they know it is ok to struggle and that life is hard sometimes, but they can do it. She teaches the students that struggling or failing is how you get better. Ms. Weber pushes her students academically, and just as importantly, she works with them to help them become good citizens. Ms. Weber shapes each one of her students in a positive way, helping them become good people. Ms. Weber is the teacher you will find talking to kids during her breaks, helping them become problem solvers. This is often done during her prep or lunch and she never complains. Ms. Weber is the total package when it comes to being an excellent teacher.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 46**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Maureen Irving

**Position:** First Grade teacher

**School:** Pennell Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Penn Delco School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Joanna Hawrylak

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Community member ( child was former student of teacher)

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Maureen Irving has been teaching in Penn Delco School district for a number of years. More recently, she has been teaching at Pennell Elementary in Aston, Pa for three years.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Ms. Tracey Irving, who has been involved in education for 42 years, still exudes that "new teacher enthusiasm", all these years later. If you walk into Pennell Elementary, and turn down the first-grade wing, you will find Ms. Irving's room, which she calls, "109 Sunshine". This name, is a perfect description of what you feel, when you walk into her classroom; sunshine, safeness, love, learning and a setting where all students succeed.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Irving runs the Pennell Elementary Environmental Club, where students reconnect to nature and learn so much. You also can find Ms. Irving's sunshine, when you visit the

local WAWA on Pennell road, where she had her classes make posters and decorate coffee sleeves, to simply brighten someone's day. Ms. Irving also is an active member of Penn Delco's Education Association, giving back to the community and the school district. Ms. Irving has this energy about her that makes you feel special and cared about. My son had Ms. Irving two years ago and we still talk about memories and experiences that occurred during that time. She left a lasting impact on my son and really made him fall in love with school.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Irving gives back to her community and school any chance she can. You will see her familiar face at Pajama Bingo, Community Day, Fall Fest, she is the most giving and selfless person. I am forever thankful for the education and love she gave to my son. Ms. Irving is a strong leader in her building, she works tirelessly to educate and motivate learners and she does it with fun, creativity and care. Ms. Irving does such an amazing job with identifying her students strengths and then, encouraging them to pursue those skills. She has this warm, nurturing heart and she cares for everyone she meets. Please consider her for this award, she is beyond deserving.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 47**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Lisa Pasceri

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Northley Middle School

**School District if applicable:** Penn-Delco School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Ryan Buterbaugh

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Ms. Pasceri, in her role as a Title I teacher and reading specialist, oversees students in grades six through eight, providing essential support for those who require extra guidance to reach their grade-level reading standards. Notably, these students do not have learning disabilities but benefit significantly from Ms. Pasceri's expertise in enhancing their literacy and comprehension skills.

Beyond her dedicated service, Ms. Pasceri brings a wealth of experience to her role, boasting 15 years of teaching. Her commitment to education is further underscored by her possession of Pennsylvania Certificates in Special Education, Elementary Education, and Reading Specialist. This extensive background reflects Ms. Pasceri's qualifications and expertise in addressing the unique needs of students in the realm of literacy.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Ms. Pasceri collaborates with all English Language Arts teachers and administration to provide tailored practice and reinforcement throughout the year. Students enter and exit her class based on their evolving literacy needs. The impact of her support is

evident in the increased confidence and ability of students to read and comprehend across all subjects. Regular reading diagnostic assessments are conducted to measure and track individual growth, and once a student achieves a goal or masters a concept, they transition out of Ms. Pasceri's supplementary reading support.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

The Title I reading support class with Ms. Pasceri offers numerous benefits. Throughout the year, parents are invited to engage in evening reading workshops at our school library, providing insights into the literacy support provided and fostering relationships with parents. Witnessing students, who may have lacked enjoyment or confidence in reading, experience success is one of the most rewarding aspects of Ms. Pasceri's work. Her commitment to helping students thrive in reading makes her an exceptional educator.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Lisa Pasceri is an exemplary role model for her students through her:

**Dedication:** Her unwavering commitment to students facing reading challenges demonstrates the value of perseverance. **Collaborative Approach:** Working closely with colleagues highlights the importance of teamwork and effective communication. **Tailored Support:** Addressing individual needs fosters a sense of personalized care, showcasing the importance of recognizing unique strengths. **Focus on Growth:** Emphasizing regular assessments promotes a culture of continuous improvement and goal-setting. **Community Engagement:** Organizing workshops and involving parents underscores the significance of community in education. **Celebration of Success:** Transitioning students out of support upon goal achievement instills a sense of accomplishment. **Confidence Building:** Transforming students' confidence in reading highlights the impact of a positive and supportive learning environment.

In summary, Ms. Pasceri's role modeling extends beyond the curriculum, encompassing dedication, collaboration, personalized attention, community engagement, and the celebration of success. Through her actions and commitment, she inspires her students to strive for excellence, overcome challenges, and become lifelong learners.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 48**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Gayle Barwick-Collins

**Position:** Art Teacher

**School:** Radnor Middle School

**School District if applicable:** Radnor Township School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** David Wiedlich

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** principal/supervisor

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Ms. Gayle Barwick-Collins holds a PA certification in K-12 Art Education. This certification was awarded in 1981. Gayle has been an Art teacher in the Radnor Township School District for 24 years, at Radnor Middle School (grade 6-8). She has earned 30 post-Bachelor's degree credits.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Ms. Barwick-Collins is an outstanding middle level art teacher who has a gift for building relationships with her all her students and has a passion for inspiring them to explore their artistic potential.

She teaches a variety of art mediums, from painting and drawing to digital and mixed media, and encourages his students to experiment with different styles and techniques. She also integrates art history and culture into his lessons, exposing his students to diverse perspectives and influences.

She creates engaging and innovative lessons that spark student creativity and curiosity, and challenges them to express themselves through art. She is not only an expert in

various art forms, but also a mentor and role model for her students. She fosters a positive and collaborative learning environment, where students feel comfortable to share their work and learn from each other.

She always does what is best for her kids, whether it is providing extra support, feedback, encouragement, or recognition. She also volunteers her time to run an art club, where she helps her students pursue their passion for art and showcase their talents. Ms. Barwick-Collins is a teacher who truly cares about her students and inspires them to love art and learning.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Barwick-Collins is an art educator who values collaboration, reflection, and innovation. She works well with her colleagues, sharing ideas, resources, and feedback to improve their teaching and learning. She is also reflective on his own instructional practices, constantly seeking ways to enhance her pedagogy and assessment. She adjusts lessons and curriculum to meet the diverse needs and interests of his students, differentiating instruction and providing choice and voice. She has also written new courses based on student interest to offer more opportunities for her students to explore their artistic potential.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Barwick-Collins is a teacher who advocates for her students, is a role-model, and always has their best interest in mind. She listens to her students' needs, concerns, and aspirations, and speaks up for them when necessary. She is also a role-model for her students, demonstrating integrity, compassion, and excellence in everything she does. She always has their best interest in mind, providing them with opportunities to grow, learn, and succeed. She supports them academically, socially, and emotionally, and celebrates their achievements. Ms. Barwick-Collins is a teacher who truly cares about her students and inspires them to be their best selves.



## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 49**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Maureen Segal

**Position:** 4th Grade Teacher

**School:** Ithan Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Radnor Township School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** John Wagner

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

It is our pleasure to nominate Mrs. Maureen Segal as an outstanding educator. Mrs. Segal has created quite a crew over her 42 years in education. Mrs. Segal has taught at Ithan Elementary School for 37 years. During that time, she has worked hard, created lofty expectations for herself and her students, and has supported thousands of students, families, and colleagues.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mrs. Segal is an exceptional teacher who truly embodies what it means to be an educator. She has a dedication and passion for teaching which is contagious and she instills that passion into her students. Mrs. Segal goes above and beyond to ensure that her students not only understand the material but also become engaged and enthusiastic about learning. She is known for helping students excel by helping them both academically and socially.

One of Mrs. Segal's greatest strengths is her ability to connect with her students. She takes the time to get to know each and every one of her students on a personal level,

making them feel seen and heard. This creates an inclusive classroom environment where all students can thrive. Mrs. Segal works to know what every child needs and provides that so they can achieve.

Mrs. Segal's dedication to her students does not end in the classroom. She is available to provide extra help and support and can be reached by students and families through email and text. She is willing to go the extra mile for her students and shares the statement, "once you are in Segal's crew, you will always be in Segal's crew." Mrs. Segal maintains lifelong relationships with her students, often following their careers and attending important milestone events.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Beyond her outstanding teaching abilities, Mrs. Segal takes extraordinary pride in her teaching profession. For many years she has volunteered to be on a variety of district committees. She has also worked with PDE to help create scoring guidelines for the PSSA. Mrs. Segal is noted for her professionalism, cheerful outlook, boundless energy and colorful outfits.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

In conclusion, Mrs. Segal is an outstanding educator who has made a profound difference in the lives of countless students, families and colleagues. Her dedication, passion, and caring nature make her a true asset to our school community. We wholeheartedly nominate her for the Excellence in Teaching award and believe that she is truly deserving of this prestigious recognition.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 50**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Taylor Ochmanowicz  
**Position:** Special Education Teacher  
**School:** Leedom Elementary School  
**School District if applicable:** Ridley School District  
**County of School:** Delaware County  
**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Angela Stickle  
**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Taylor Ochmanowicz has been an integral part of the Leedom elementary family for the past 5 years now. Taylor Ochmanowicz is a part of the Autistic Support Team at Leedom, where she currently teaches 5th grade Autistic Support. Taylor is a certified special education and general education teacher, but she also recently earned her Master's degree and became a certified reading specialist.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Taylor is an advocate for her students each and every day. Taylor makes sure that each need of her students is met, to the best of her ability. Taylor always makes an effort to give her students creative and immersive learning opportunities, and always sets high expectations for their learning. She always greets her students with a smile, listens to every story (no matter how long) and offers more patience than imaginable.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Taylor is truly a "solution seeker" and is always brainstorming with her teammates to better help them and their needs. She is always the first one to lend a hand, leave a chocolate on your desk after a tough day, or offer a kind word in a tough moment. Taylor is the teammate that you want to have, and the one you wish you could be. She advocates for the needs of her teammates and always puts others first.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Miss Ochmanowicz is a role model for her students in that she always acts with kindness and empathy first. She teaches her students to advocate for their needs, while also maintaining a level of respect towards others. Any student that walks through her classroom is truly gaining so many skills to be successful in life. Taylor is simply a ray of sunshine, shining down on so many students. We are so grateful to have her.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 51**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Angela Stickles

**Position:** 4th Grade Autistic Support Teacher

**School:** Leedom Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Ridley School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Taylor Clymer

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** colleague

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

I am nominating Angela Stickles, a 4th grade Autistic Support teacher at Leedom Elementary. She currently works with students receiving the full-time and Supplemental level of Autistic Support services, as well as those with Intellectual Disabilities. Angela recently earned her Masters at West Chester University with an Autism endorsement. Her Master's project was on Reproductive Health, Hygiene, & Self-Care Curriculum specifically for girl with Autism. Upon exploring resources for this content area, she realized there is a lack of resources and curriculum available to assist female students in this area. Angela's curriculum focuses on 3 areas; Reproductive Health, Hygiene, and Self Care. This curriculum comes with countless resources including social stories, teacher guided lessons and interactive student resources. Ang is a fabulous educator and a solution seeker. When she sees an area of need, she typically develops a plan to supplement that area of need for her students and her Master's Project really highlights this quality she exhibits.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Last year specifically, Angela worked with one student to show her how to brush her hair and put it into a ponytail. She always takes the extra moment to truly teach a student a skill that will benefit them in the long term. She also assisted in teaching/collaborating with a student and her family about how they could help make her menstrual cycle "make sense". This was another example of how desperately our students on the spectrum need these types of resources. This December, 2023, she rallied a few colleagues and her husband's PT clinic to adopt a family for Christmas as our school because the family missed the cutoff to express that they may have needed assistance at Christmas. When she heard that this student was in need, she immediately sprang into action making a plan for how we would get all the things on this student's list purchased for the holidays.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Not only is Angela a phenomenal teacher, she is also a wonderful mentor and colleague. When I first met Ang, she and I were both new to the district and spent our first year "figuring it out". It was whirlwind and we were just coming out of the 2019 COVID pandemic. We taught virtually till November, and then students came back full time. From the very beginning, Angela was not only the lead teacher but was so patient in teaching me all things SPED. Angela always cultivated an environment that made me feel welcomed and allowed me to ask questions when I needed clarity. She was a positive role model and was so helpful in helping me discover my passion for Special Education. Ang is and has always been my loudest cheerleader and is truly an inspiration.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

One of my favorite qualities that Ang possesses is her ability to be honest and transparent with her students. She does a wonderful job at XXC teaching. This can be defined as XXX. When Angela is feeling overwhelmed, she takes the moment to highlight her emotions and walk through how she copes with the emotions she is currently feeling. Angela is very passionate about Social Emotional Learning. When her students are overwhelmed with big emotions, Ang can typically be seen sharing her calming presences and never adding to the chaos.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 52**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Lori Kane

**Position:** Kindergarten Teacher

**School:** Woodlyn Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Ridley School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Meredith Ruzowicz

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Daughters teacher

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Lori Kane, Woodlyn Elementary School kindergarten teacher for the 2022-2023 Excellence in Teaching Award.

Mrs Kane consistently demonstrates high ideals, professionalism, knowledge, and the ability to help students become the best they can be, both in the classroom and in the community. As a kindergarten teacher, she opens new doors for her students by introducing them to the abilities they didn't know they had. The one thing a teacher can do that makes a bigger difference than all those other things combined: Know my child. Mrs Kane creates an inviting, gentle learning environment, going far beyond letters and numbers. She is consistently tending to the hearts of her students. I know my daughter will receive so much more than great academic scores and the gift of learning. She is extending gifts from her heart—gifts that will have a long-lasting impact on my child for years to come. When my child has doubts and fears, she is tended to by her teacher's genuine understanding. She is heard by a teacher who finds ways to fix her worries with an attitude of love and a communication style that makes any heart feel at home. My child feels the glory and worth of her teacher's patience. When my child feels overwhelmed, her teacher works to create a fresh, new motivation and determination. When my child feels like giving up, she is given the tools to ignite her perseverance. If

she falls, Mrs. Kane is by her side to help her rise. Through a special teacher's patience, my child is learning she is capable of conquering anything. Possibly the best part of all is that she experiences the gift of being known. In her classroom, her hopes and dreams are nurtured. Her teacher encourages her strengths and accepts her weaknesses. Her unique personality traits are appreciated and celebrated. She can take on the world and her school days knowing she's perfectly perfect, just as she is.

**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

.



## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 53**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Michael Terreri

**Position:** 5th grade teacher

**School:** Leedom Elementary School -Ridley School District

**School District if applicable:** Ridley School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Megan Cini

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** co-worker

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Attended West Chester University. Has his Master's degree in Education. He has been teaching for atleast 15 years. Currently teaching 5th grade. 5th Grade Safety Coordinator. Teaches several professional development classes for the district throughout the year.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mike goes above and beyond for both his students, our 5th grade autistic support students, and staff in the district. Mike makes learning fun for all. He will find ways to make topics more interesting. Mike is the first one to try new technology, which his students love. Whether it be integrated the ipads, making connections in the collabatory, dash's, etc. Mike also runs or 5th safety program at Leedom. This program promotes accountability, responsibility, and dedication for all 5th grade students that apply. Mike also coordinates our 5th grade, 3 day camp experience for all of our 5th grade students. This is a once in a lifetime experience for our 5th graders before they go to the middle school. He ensures that this culminates all of their years here at Leedom.

Being one of the only male teachers in the building he also serves as a valuable role model for the boys in the school.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mike will work alongside of both his grade partner and our Autistic support 5th grade teacher to make sure learning is occurring across the board. He invites the AS students into his classroom on the daily for multiple subjects. He always participates in school wide events, making them unique and fun for all.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mike is a role model to all of our students but especially the boys. He is one of the only male teachers in our building. He provides advice, mentorship to those who may need a little extra guidance. Mike is one who always jumps into school wide activities, showing the kids that sometimes laughter is the best medicine. A great example is when he volunteers to dress as a Christmas tree during our sing along having all the students "Rocking Around the Christmas Tree" song. He is also known as "Mr. T"!

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 54**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Mike Terreri

**Position:** 5th Grade Teacher

**School:** Leedom Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Ridley School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Catherine Sabatini

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Parent of one of his students and coworker

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

5th grade

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

My daughter has severe anxiety that after Covid affected her attendance. In 4th grade, she was having panic attacks regularly about going to school. It got to the point that she missed so many days she was on the truancy list. Needless to say, we were very worried about what her 5th-grade year would look like. Mr. Tererri was my daughter's 5th-grade teacher. The only day my daughter had a panic attack before school was the first day. After that, she was excited, or as excited as a typical 5th grader is, to go to school. I credit this 100% to Mr. Tererri and the relationships he builds with his students. My daughter was able to relax in class because she had a teacher who understood her and made her feel safe in class. His classroom management and ability to connect to each student truly created a safe and fun learning environment. We are forever grateful to him.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

In addition to my daughter having him as a teacher, I have also worked alongside him. I am a special education teacher and while I teach 3rd grade, I have been able to witness how he creates an inclusive classroom for all the 5th graders, regardless if they are in his class for a short amount of time or all day. He is also always willing to help a co-worker in any way possible!

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

He is a role model because he shows by example what it means to have integrity and give respect to others. This is his genuine approach on a daily basis. He is able to have such strong relationships with all of his students because he listens to what they have to say and validates their feelings.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 55**

*Application 1 of 2 for Aaron Goldfarb*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Aaron Goldfarb

**Position:** 5th Grade Teacher

**School:** Media Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Sarah McKay

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** student's parent

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

I am not fully aware of Aaron's background and accolades but I know he has been with Media Elementary school for awhile. He is very active outside of the regular school day with extra programs like the Reading Olympics and our schools equity team.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

My son has difficulty with reading and has a learning disability in writing. Aaron is always encouraging him and giving him confidence. He nominated my son to be a reader at the winter choral concert and it really gave my son a HUGE boost. He knew that was what he needed and I don't know if most teachers would have taken that leap. He also really reflects on his IEP and pushes and challenges everyone on the team, which isn't always common either, to find the best thing for my son, even when it means going against the flow. Any time I have ever wanted to speak to him about my son, he is immediately available and flexible. He is not only this way with our family but all the families. Instead of just uploading his weekly update to the website that is required, he

sends different ways and says that if you need it sent to you in another format he is happy to do that to keep an family in the loop. Always going above and beyond.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

As mentioned above, Aaron worked on my son's IEP team. Even in moments when he had different ideas, he was thoughtful and respectful to the entire team but also strong in his convictions. He was not afraid to suggestion something new. He touches base with everyone on the team to keep things moving smoothly and keeps me, the parent in the loop.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

He is role model to my son and the rest of his class with his even keeled demeanor. He promised the class that he would never yell and when my son told me this I wasn't sure if it could possibly be true, but it is. He has not yelled even once the entire year. He models for kids that you can stay calm and give feedback and guidance to poor behavior. He is also a very encouraging teacher. He teaches the kids about how to find the positive in others before correctly each other. He fosters a healthy and respectful classroom.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 56**

*Application 2 of 2 for Aaron Goldfarb*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Aaron Goldfarb

**Position:** 5th grade teacher

**School:** Media Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Brooke Forry

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** parent of student

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mr. Goldfarb has been a valuable asset to the Rose Tree Media School District for 18 years. He has a Bachelor's Degree from Penn State University and a Master's in Education from the University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Goldfarb has spent the bulk of his time in the Rose Tree Media School District teaching fifth grade at Media Elementary School, where he is also a valued and engaged member of the Faculty Equity Team, and serves as the Program Director of the Reading Olympics Club.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mr. Goldfarb puts his heart and soul into not just teaching, but connecting with his students. He encourages the use of comfortable and varied spaces for daily reading in the classroom, or takes his students outside to read when the weather is nice. After a difficult few years for my son with his anxiety, Mr. Goldfarb has worked with us from day one to address his emotional needs, ensuring that school feels welcoming and relaxing, so he can learn without undue stress. He has taken time to meet with us

multiple times outside of school hours to learn more about his anxiety triggers, relating with stories from his own life, and proposing solutions to ensure that my son feels comfortable and happy in his classroom. He has reframed the idea of tests and grades in a way that helps my son focus less on the stress of any outcomes and more on growing and learning in his own individual way. Mr. Goldfarb has played to my son's strengths and interests, as he does with each of his students, to create connection and a passion for learning. He occasionally joins them at their lunch tables to engage in casual conversation and get to know his students better. He shows up for students (past and present) at performances, sporting events, and more to support them in their endeavors and growth outside of the classroom. Mr. Goldfarb sees and understands that being a kid in today's world can feel challenging and overwhelming, and he is there to cheer on his students in every way possible.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Goldfarb facilitates valuable field trips and outside-of-school learning experiences, such as an annual fifth grade trip to Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. He makes learning fun and interesting by incorporating weekly Toonsday lessons, where each Tuesday, students analyze the lyrics to a popular song, engaging them in reading in a new way that highlights the current pop culture they're interested in. He incentivizes students with rewards for positive behaviors exhibited in his classroom and creates a true sense of supportive community. Mr. Goldfarb carefully and thoughtfully prepares his students for the transition to middle school, fostering independence, individuality, and confidence through ongoing support and encouragement.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Goldfarb leads with kindness, curiosity, and acceptance of all individuals. With his calm and relatable demeanor, he is practicing what he preaches to his students, working to make the world a better place, one connection at a time. Mr. Goldfarb's work on the Media Elementary Equity Team and District Advisory Council point to his passion for creating equitable and engaging learning spaces for ALL students, and it's clear that cultivating a supportive community that lifts students up is at the root of his teaching philosophy. As a product of the Rose Tree Media School District himself, he is giving back to the community that raised him in an indispensable way.



## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 57**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Charles Jacien

**Position:** Learning support

**School:** Rose Tree Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** michele l deery

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Teacher for my son

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

The Principle could provide that information

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

My son, missed in house schooling during covid, and requires extra help. Mr. Jacien has been that support for him for two years. As a mom, my heart broke as this was affecting my son's confidence, how he carried himself, he reluctancy to step up and participate. Mr. Jacien has worked with my son, not only in the academics but in this arena. My son now is showing who he truly is, with a confidence that is hard to put into words. He has taught my son, and several other children about their strengths, and that its okay to have a weakness. It has created a balance that is irreplaceable.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Jacien has worked along side BOTH of my son's teachers to create an environment that positive, where my child loves to learn. Mr. Jacien takes a personal interest in the activites and interests that my son loves.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Jacien is always positive, and kind. The kids gravitate towards his positive energy.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 58**

*Application 1 of 6 for Christy Yarnall*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Christy Yarnall

**Position:** 1st Grade Teacher

**School:** Media Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Marie Costa

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mrs. Yarnall is a first grade teacher at Media Elementary School. She has more than 10 years of teaching experience in the primary grades.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mrs. Yarnall is often given students who have significant behavior concerns as she is patient and always willing to try a new strategy. She develops a great rapport with all of her students. As a veteran teacher of the primary grades, she uses the science of reading to support her instruction in reading and writing. She has a solid understanding of phonics and provides small group reading experiences for her students.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Yarnall works well with all other staff. She works well with her team of other first grade teachers to plan effective instruction and intervention. She also works diligently

with the special education team, including the teachers who she co-plans with, follows positive behavior support plans, and welcomes all students into her room. Additionally, she works well with support staff who provide push-in support in her classroom, providing specific feedback and to them and offering suggestions for how to assist her students.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Yarnall is bubbly, friendly, and welcoming. She accepts all for who they are and meets their needs. This is a great role model for the students to emulate. They know that they need to respect all despite everyone's differences. She provides support to the students in an individual way.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 59**  
*Application 2 of 6 for Christy Yarnall*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Christy Yarnall

**Position:** 1st grade teacher

**School:** Media Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Trisha Elmer

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Coworker

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Christy has many years of experience teaching in the primary grades. She currently teaches all subjects in 1st grade.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Christy has great rapport with her students, comes in each day willing to handle whatever is thrown at her, is always willing to try a new behavior strategy to support her students.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Christy works with her team to develop challenging and interesting lessons that meet her students needs.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

She is always positive and encourages her students to be who they are. She celebrates each student and their differences.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 60**

*Application 3 of 6 for Christy Yarnall*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Christy Yarnall

**Position:** 1st Grade Teacher

**School:** Media Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Danielle Sharp

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Christy is a 1st grade teacher, who has been teaching for over 6 years.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Christy makes sure all her students unique needs are met. She believes in inclusion and works hard to make sure everyone feels accepted and successful.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Christy works with the special education department as well as the behavior managers to ensure her students are getting what they need.

- 4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Christy exudes kindness to all. I am new to Media Elementary this year and she makes a point to make sure everything is going well. She treats her students the same way, making sure they are okay and feel happy here at school.



**APPLICATION NUMBER: 61**  
*Application 4 of 6 for Christy Yarnall*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Christy Yarnall

**Position:** 1st Grade Teacher

**School:** Media Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Heather Wooding

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co-Worker

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Christy has been a member of the RTMSD community for a long time. She is currently a 1st grade teacher.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Christy is an extremely hard worker. She works to meet the needs of all of the students in her room. She creates an environment for students to feel safe and supported. If a student needs small group instruction, she provides it for them. If students need flexible seating, she looks for ways to help them.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Christy is a great team player and is always willing to help out. Whenever Christy has students that work with other teachers, she makes sure to check in with the teacher to help the student be successful. For example, I am the math specialist and we work

together to best support the students. We check-in with each other to see how the student is performing in class to see how we can best assist the student.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Christy is always showing kindness which you see in her students. She always says hello to people in the hallway and makes you feel seen.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 62**

*Application 5 of 6 for Christy Yarnall*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Christy Yarnall

**Position:** First Grade Teacher

**School:** Media Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Dana Welc

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Coworker

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Christy Yarnall has been teaching in the Rose Tree Media School District for about 15 years. After a couple of years being a daily substitute, working in all of the classrooms, Christy landed her current job of teaching first grade.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Christy is well loved by her students and their families. She has a positive attitude and a kindness that she spreads to all of her students. Christy makes connections with her students by sharing personal stories that connect with her class. She makes open communication a priority with her families, keeping them informed of what's going on in the classroom with their children. Christy creates a predictable structure that her students can count on, while keeping open about throwing in some special days for her kids. She shows compassion for all students, even the neediest of her group.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

I have loved working with Christy over the past 15 years! She is positive and upbeat during our team meetings, and always keeps the team on task to make the best use of our time. Christy is creative and shares everything with the team. She is the one of the best treats on our staff, with a great sense of humor and an openness that makes you feel like a part of her family. She is loved by peers, families and students.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Christy is a positive influence on her students, taking the time to talk to them about positive interactions with one another and modeling kindness and compassion. She is firm yet has a gentleness that her students get to experience every day.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 63**

*Application 6 of 6 for Christy Yarnall*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Christy Yarnall

**Position:** 1st grade teacher

**School:** Media Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Sandi German

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague and grade level partner

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Christy began her teaching career as support staff in a learning support classroom and then she became our building substitute. After being a building substitute for two years, she became a contracted first grade teacher. She looped with her students for one year to second grade and has been a first grade teacher ever since. Christy has a master's degree and has been teaching for over 10 years.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Christy is an extraordinary teacher who goes above and beyond for her students. She is extremely patient, nurturing and willing to meet the students where they are academically, behaviorally and/or emotionally. She has had students with extreme behaviors destroying the classroom while she teaches and she doesn't miss a beat. She keeps all of her students safe while giving them what they need to succeed.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

I mentored Christy when she became a first grade teacher many years ago. She has been an integral part of our first grade team. She coordinates and/or assists in grade level projects and is always willing to lend a helping hand. Christy is willing to do the research to figure out a new activity or to learn a new technique to help make her lessons more beneficial for her students and our grade level.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Christy is a role model for her students because she displays acceptance, patience and flexibility. She has displayed these traits over the years in her classroom as she worked with challenging students. Christy is willing to try new techniques to help all of her students succeed. Each day she demonstrates to the students how to be flexible, accepting and patient through her daily interactions with their peers.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 64**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** William Booth

**Position:** Math Teacher

**School:** Springton Lake Middle School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Sharon Williams

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co-worker

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mr. Booth has been teaching in the Delaware County area for 23 years. He teaches 8th-grade Math at Springton Lake Middle School in the Rose Tree Media School District. In addition, he is the middle-level athletic director and coordinates all of the competition schedules for over 700 students.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mr. Booth goes above and beyond for his students on a regular basis. For example, he regularly holds extra help sessions after school hours. The teacher work day ends at 3:20, but Mr. Booth can be found in his room until the late busses come for the students at 4 PM. During this time, he explains, reteaches, and encourages students to be and do their best. In addition, Mr. Booth cultivates positive relationships with his students, creating a nurturing and inclusive classroom environment where students feel valued, respected, and supported emotionally, socially, and academically. He advocates for his students' needs, rights, and interests, collaborating with colleagues, administrators, and stakeholders to secure necessary resources, accommodations, and support services to

address individual learning for every student. Finally, Mr. Booth communicates regularly with parents and caregivers, sharing student progress, concerns, and accomplishments.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Booth is a member of the math department and a team of content teachers. In both of these roles, Mr. Booth is a leader. One example of how well Mr. Booth works alongside his peers is in his professional learning community with his math department colleagues. In the weekly meetings, he actively participates in discussing student performance data, instructional practices, and student interventions. Mr. Booth shares resources, materials, and best practices to support his and his department's instructional goals. He works together with the other teachers to address challenges and solve problems that arise within their classrooms. For example, they collaborate to develop interventions for struggling students, implement differentiated instructional strategies, and monitor progress to ensure student success. Mr. Booth also works on a content team of 4 teachers. There is a language arts teacher, a science teacher and a social studies teacher that share 100 students. Within the team community, Mr. Booth participates in all of the same planning as he does with his math department for planning for interventions and differentiation. He is a gold star in both cases.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Booth employs innovative teaching techniques to bring math to life for his students. One notable example is his creative approach to teaching the Pythagorean theorem. During this unit, he designed a captivating beach-themed activity where two characters had to plan a route from their places on the beach to a taco truck. This activity challenged students to plot a route across the beach to purchase their lunch by following either a right angle or a diagonal path; this sort of student-centered lesson makes complex mathematical concepts engaging and relatable. Mr. Booth consistently puts in this amount of effort to make math come alive for his students every day. In addition, Mr. Booth goes above and beyond when his students struggle. For example, we just concluded our parent-teacher conferences, and we had a student who doesn't always advocate for himself when he doesn't understand. The parents brought the child with them to hear what his teachers had to say about him. The child was visibly nervous about sitting in the hot seat and hearing from his teachers. Mr. Booth sensed the child's



discomfort and immediately came to his rescue by reassuring him that we were all there to help him. He continued by offering for the child to come to his class whenever he needed to to get a bit of extra attention, even if it wasn't in math concepts. The student visibly relaxed and was then able to participate in the conference. It was awesome to watch.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 65**

*Application 1 of 9 for Hans Kalbach*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Hans Kalbach

**Position:** Teacher - 4th Grade

**School:** Media Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Kelley Wiest

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co-worker

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Before starting his teaching career, Hans Kalbach worked with pre-school children as a pre-school teacher at Interboro Kindercare, Great Beginnings Day Care and St Kevin's Day Care. Once graduating from West Chester University, he taught Second Grade at St Madeline/St Rose School. From there, he began working in the Rose Tree Media School District at Media Elementary School District as a Second Grade teacher. Hans taught Second Grade for 20 years. He is now in his third year as a Fourth Grade teacher at Media Elementary School. In addition, Hans has also been working at Adventure Day Camp for the past 21 years. During that time, Hans was the Assistant Director for 1 year and has been the Camp Director for the past 19 years.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Hans Kalbach has gone above and beyond for his students in many ways. In addition to ensuring that his students do well academically, he is a person who truly cares about and puts the wellbeing of his students above all else. One example of this is when he

had a student who had many social and emotional hurdles in her life which caused her to act out in class. Instead of getting upset or frustrated with this child, Hans spent almost every one of his lunch and planning times that year to sit and talk to help that student. Hans has had two other students I know of who have had anxiety or other similar situations that they struggled with. Hans took the time to research these situations to find the best ways that would benefit and help these students. He worked with them to help them feel more comfortable and confident in the classroom. Hans is the teacher who goes on the playground during recess - not because he has recess duty - but because he wants to make sure that the students in his class are having fun and having positive experiences. Of course, he also enjoys going on the playground to have FUN with his students and has even been caught doing a cartwheel or two!

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Hans Kalbach is admired by his peers for many reasons. He has been a peer coach and advisor. Teaching 2nd Grade with Hans has been one of my greatest teaching experiences. I have learned much from him - patience, empathy, and fresh perspectives. Although I have been teaching longer than Hans, when I moved from one school in our district to Media Elem. School and had also taught 2nd Grade for many years, Hans took the time to show me how "things were done" at a different school. He didn't assume that just because I knew the curriculum and had experience, that the environment would be the same. He was not getting paid to be my mentor. His natural ability to extend that kindness and empathy led to my being able to make my classroom environment thrive. Hans's contributions to our MES community have been in abundance. As Social Studies coordinator, on election years, he organizes an election area in the school where all students can go to vote for an event. The voting location has everything from a sign in page to voting booths! This enables the students to learn about the process that is going on in their world. Also as SS Coordinator, Hans organizes the Black History Poster Contest. All students from K to 5 are invited to participate and Hans displays the posters for all to see and vote for. Once he tallies the many votes, he hangs the handmade ribbons for the "winners". Hans Kalbach is an artist! When MES turned 100 yrs old, Hans was asked to create the artwork for the banner and shirts for this historic event. He once donned a cape at a schoolwide assembly and was "Captain Powerwords" to help reinforce literacy! He wore a paper blue beard as "Blue Guru" when we were encouraging grit and positive mindset. To help the students have a positive attitude and create teamwork & sportsmanship, Hans and our school mascot

had an ice-cream challenge! Hans Kalbach is definitely an excellent teacher who works with his peers to help his students succeed in all areas.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Hans Kalbach is a role model to his students by the way he acts with and in front of them. He teaches his students to show kindness and respect to all. One way that he does this his lessons about treating ALL people in our building with kindness. Hans specifically teaches and reminds his students that the custodial staff in our school are VERY important people. He invites the custodial staff into his classroom so that his students can REALLY get to know them and understand their jobs. He creates a situation where a relationship can be formed and grow as the year goes on. Hans encourages his students to always show their best effort and to make mistakes so that they can learn. He is not afraid to let them see his own mistakes or admit that he does not know something. By showing this to his students, they are not afraid to be brave and make mistakes to learn in his class as well.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 66**

*Application 2 of 9 for Hans Kalbach*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Hans Kalbach

**Position:** 4th Grade Teacher

**School:** Media Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Miles Kalbach

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Brother

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

So often when discussing careers with my peers, the general tone is one of either discontent or defeat. It's so refreshing speaking to Hans about his work. After all these years, he's as enthusiastic, energetic, and appreciative as he's ever been. He speaks so fondly of his work and his relationship with his students, it's inspiring and uplifting. I can't say I've ever gotten to SEE Hans in action as a teacher, but knowing him personally its very easy to understand why he's held in such high regard by those who have. Hans is probably THE most creative, motivated, and imaginitive person I've ever had the pleasure of collaborating with. He's exactly the type of person I hope my kids get the benefit of learning from in their own schools.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

When we were kids, I looked up to Hans in many ways. He was an absolute guru with LEGO, a visual artist in many mediums, and also one of the most quick-witted characters in the family. Seeing what he could bring to life from his imagination was a huge

motivating factor in my decision to pursue a career in the arts. Many years later, when I decided to take on the overwhelming task of writing and directing a film, he was the FIRST person I approached about embarking on the journey with me, and I'm so glad I did. Hans brought his unique perspective and spectrum of artistic ability to every challenge we encountered: writing the script, crafting crucial and complicated props, puppeteering, dressing sets, directing actors... he even managed to literally "turn night into day" one evening when filming went long – with nothing but a single well-placed spotlight and some tissue-paper on a window! The guy is magic.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

In short, Hans is an incredibly creative, clever, smart, funny, and multi-talented guy who I would gladly and confidently follow into any challenge. I honestly can think of no one in my personal life who is better suited to the incredibly important work of shaping young minds, and I am envious of those who get to work alongside him!

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 67**

*Application 3 of 9 for Hans Kalbach*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Hans Kalbach

**Position:** 4th Grade Teacher

**School:** Media Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Timothy Fink

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Coworker (teacher)

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Hans Kalbach has been working for over 20+ years at Media Elementary where he has primarily taught 2nd and 4th grade students. Hans is this most creative teacher I've worked with as he encourages students to use their imaginations, dream big, and explore all possibilities.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Hans Kalbach has helped illustrate numerous student/teacher work and projects to help maximize the design and potential of the students, the staff, and the school.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

As an encore teacher, Hans Kalbach has always been great to work alongside as he communicates clearly and allows for support before/after lessons for those students who need it most.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

I am always impressed how Hans Kalbach looks to help students to appreciate the custodians and encourages students to appreciate their community. Recently, Hans has shared his vision to get a portion of the playground set aside with items for imagination and creative play which I think would greatly benefit the students of Media Elementary.



**APPLICATION NUMBER: 68**

*Application 4 of 9 for Hans Kalbach*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Hans Kalbach

**Position:** 4th grade teacher

**School:** Media Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Brenda Millette

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** co-worker teacher

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Hans has been teaching at Media Elementary School for at least 20 years in 2nd and 4th grade. He has worked tirelessly, humbly, creatively and thoughtfully through the ups and downs and challenges of teaching. He has been instrumental on several committees including Positive Behavior Committee and Social Studies Coordinator.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Hans captivates students attention by being creative and ambitious in his lessons and assignments. He designed a Captain Powerwords costume and skit complete with mask and cape and scooted into an assembly to teach the whole school the importance of developing and understanding vocabulary words. He had his 4th grade students design an electrical circuit board to light up a class project on the use of light for diverse holiday celebrations. One 4th grade student was notoriously languid about learning until Han began his poetry lessons. That child then began writing spine tingling "Poe" style poems that actually raised the hair on my arm, and now shows great promise as a

writer. When students were studying Community he invited community workers and family members to school to interest students in job/careers. Hans has great artistic talent and creates original and beautiful posters/ decorations for his lessons and classrooms. He generously designs for other teachers as well.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Hans worked tirelessly and creatively with our 2nd grade team to enhance, update and dramatize Community lessons. Students learned poems, sang songs and spoke eloquently about the importance of community. Hans ensured each child spoke confidently to be heard in front of a large audience. Hans initiated a problem solving lesson so class mayors would think of a problem facing the community then come up with ideas to solve the problem by working together. To show how an assembly line works, Hans created a valentine making work line in which every product should come out equally made. This 2nd grade unit is still used today and is talked about as a highlight of the 2nd grade experience. This year Hans has an ambitious idea to bring a creativity station to our recess yard which is dominated by athletics. Hans recognized some students want to be in an imaginative play area or have art or writing materials available. He brought up the idea at a staff meeting. His ideas sound lovely and powerful and will ensure that more representation of fun and cooperative play is available to meet the needs of all recreational styles on our playground. With an "Teaching Excellence" Award his Imagination Station playground idea can flourish.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Hans is a role model to his students. He has high expectations for learning and behaving kindly to the whole community. He shows lightheartedness by participating in PTG ice cream eating contests or dressing up as a giant hot dog for Halloween. He lets the students laugh and enjoy some silly antics, so they know school is a fun, caring place. He exhibits caring for all by having students meet, greet and interview our custodians. Each year his students write letters of thanks and draw pictures to decorate our custodians' closets. He is incredibly thoughtful to all members of a school community and wants his students to understand their own role to keep a community safe, kind and clean. He is calm and kind to students experiencing sadness, trouble, anxiety or outlandish behavior. I have never seen him "lose his cool" with a student. Once I saw a

student screaming on his back in the hallway with several adults crowded around. Hans walked over and gently asked if the student was ready to walk calmly back to class. That student suddenly took the option to walk slowly and calmly right next to Hans. Everyone sighed with relief. Hans is a measured, encouraging, experienced teacher who chooses to remain in a rather difficult profession and continually offers his students an educational, kind, safe, place to learn. To my knowledge he has never received any extra recognition or riches for his tremendous efforts. He is a truly wonderful teacher and person. Thank you for considering him for your prestigious award.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 69**

*Application 5 of 9 for Hans Kalbach*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Hans Kalbach

**Position:** 4th Grade Teacher

**School:** Media Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Staci Schettone

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mr. Kalbach received his degree in Elementary Education from West Chester University. Hans has taught for 23 years. Hans has taught:-Interboro Kindercare-Great Beginnings Day Care-St. Kevin's Day Care-2nd Grade at St. Madeline School (2000-2003)-2nd Grade at Media Elementary (2003-2020)-4th Grade at Media Elementary (2020-Present)-Social Studies Coordinator at Media ElementaryHans has also served as Director of Adventure Day Camp in Upper Merion Township for approximately twenty years. Each year, Hans plans and implements our annual Quarter Carnival. The funds raised at our Quarter Carnival benefits our Tony Chiccino Memorial Scholarship Fund. The Tony Chiccino Scholarship awards scholarships for children to attend camp. It also funds special events to occur at camp such as the Franklin Institute Traveling Science Show, Elmwood Park Traveling Zoo, and special treats.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Hans always goes above and beyond in EVERYTHING he does! For every theme week at camp, Hans creates banners displaying amazing artwork with exquisite detail to get families excited and prepared for the upcoming week! In 2001, our camp suffered a horrible loss when one of our assistant directors suffered a heart attack playing basketball with a group of our campers. Tony passed away at camp that day. We chose to honor Tony by hosting an annual Quarter Carnival. Originally, the funds raised from this carnival were awarded as a scholarship to a student that attended the Catholic School where Tony taught. However, when Tony's former school closed, we chose to use the fund as a way to award scholarships to children that wanted to attend our camp and couldn't afford to do so. The Tony Chiccino Memorial Scholarship Fund also funds special events for the camp to take part in the Franklin Institute Traveling Science Show, Elmwood Park Traveling Zoo, etc. Hans single handedly built EVERY game and booth at the carnival using recycled materials such as pizza boxes, toilet paper/paper towel rolls, supply boxes, banner paper, etc. There are easily twenty to thirty booths every year. There would be no carnival if it were not for Hans and the Tony Chiccino Fund would not exist without his tireless efforts year after year.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

I had the privilege of working with Hans at Upper Merion Adventure Day Camp for many years as his assistant director and then alongside him as a Director of my own camp site. While working as Hans' assistant director, Hans taught me the value of being well organized and the importance of creating a memorable experience each and everyday for our campers. Together, we would plan "theme days" that would immerse our campers and staff into unforgettable days. For example, we created a "Pirate Theme Day" where campers created their own treasure chests and pirate ships out of various materials and lots of gems! They would go on a scavenger hunt led by a camp counselor dressed and speaking like a pirate that would eventually lead the campers to a pool full of gold coins and popsicles! They would challenge other groups of campers to "pirate games" that would result in lots of laughter and exhaustion! Our staff always looked forward to what these days held and talked about them for years!

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Hans is an amazing person to work with. He is fair and kind to all of his staff and colleagues. His work ethic at camp is something to admire and he models exactly what it

takes for a camp to run smoothly. He is very clear about what he expects from every assistant director and age group staff. At the end of the summer, Hans is required to evaluate every staff member and his evaluations are always very fair and clear. He highlights your strengths and weaknesses and always gives great feedback on how you can improve the following year. This allows each staff member to grow and eventually move up in the rankings if they choose to do so. Hans' organization and energy at camp is contagious and his staff strives to follow his lead.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 70**

*Application 6 of 9 for Hans Kalbach*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Hans Kalbach

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Rose Tree Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Susan R Cosgrove

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Friend

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Hans has an elementary education degree and has taught for over 20 years in elementary school settings. He has directed an adventure day camp for 20 years and is the social studies coordinator for his district.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Hans always finds fun ways to help his students learn.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Hans helps to coordinate events for his school which benefits all students at school.

- 4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 71**

*Application 7 of 9 for Hans Kalbach*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Hans Kalbach

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Media Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Jayne Walker

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Former colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

I would like to take this opportunity to nominate Hans Kalbach for the Franklin Mint Excellence in Teaching Award. Hans is currently a fourth grade teacher at Media Elementary School in the Rose Tree Media School District. Previous to his years in fourth grade, he was a second grade teacher. It was in second grade that I had the privilege to work with him both as a learning support teacher and as a grade level colleague. As a support teacher, my students were mainstreamed into Mr. Kalbach's classroom for the content areas of Science and Social Studies. Then, due to a decrease in learning support classrooms, I was transferred to 2nd grade where we worked together as grade level partners. Hans has been a staff member of Media Elementary for I believe 20 years. We worked together for 14 years until my retirement in 2017. Outside the classroom Mr. Kalbach's achievements and interests are well-rounded. He is an artist, a musician (playing both the saxophone and flute) and, in his early teaching career performed as a mummer with the Avalon String Band. In the summers he spends his time as a director of a summer camp.



**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

During the years I worked with Hans Kalbach, I observed him to be a professional who advocated for his students, worked tirelessly to ensure his students individual needs were met and challenged the children every day to put forth their best effort. Further, he consistently used positive dialogue to effectively solve classroom related problems and student challenges. I personally observed him modifying curriculum and assessments to provide better understanding for at-risk students and students with learning needs. His beautiful, personally made classroom decorations, posters related to the subject area standards and fun-filled antics brought the curriculum to life, making him a well-loved and respected teacher among all the second grade children. When Mr. Kalbach came into your classroom, the students' faces lit up! Many grade level activities in the second grade curriculum required at-home preparation, practice and work on the part of the students. For students who may not have had the at-home support necessary to fulfill the required student obligations, Hans would step in to make sure each child was prepared. Whether it be to help construct a building for the model town, complete research questions for the living history museum, create and supply costumes, or to assist with guided practice on projects and homework assignments, he was always there to give assistance. He very much wanted every child to experience success in his classroom. And that they did! His students were so proud to call him their teacher.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Kalbach was a key player who consistently worked alongside his grade level peers and colleagues to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. At our weekly grade level meetings, he would often come up with creative ideas to get difficult concepts across to our young learners. His ideas provided necessary background knowledge, student engagement and follow-through activities in order to assess student learning. His ideas and assistance in helping us create activities that reached the wide range of abilities in our classrooms was so appreciated. If you needed creative posters or artwork to go along with your lessons, no worries. Hans happily gave assistance with that! On many occasions I would observe him spending hours of his personal time planning and preparing effective lessons, analyzing student work, making sure his classroom was organized, and the hall outside his room was decorated and inviting for his students and colleagues. Being extremely talented, both musically and artistically,

Han's creativity could be seen throughout the entire school. Posters, displays, event flyers, festive decorations (the list goes on and on) were all hand-drawn and beautifully colored. He spent so much time and took a lot of pride in his artistic works. I often said he should patent his language arts posters, they were just that beautiful!

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Kalbach is a seasoned veteran who takes his role as an educator seriously. In a time where educators are in short supply, are faced with managing challenges like never before, feel stressed due to the lack of time necessary to manage a work life balance, teachers are having to work harder than ever to manage their duties as educators. It was apparent to me that Hans demonstrated the grit and determination necessary for being an educator in difficult times. That grit and determination carried over into his classroom where the expectations were the same for each of his students. He always modeled what he expected from his children. He was a student advocate. He was kind, professional, set challenging goals for his students and helped them manage their work to achieve those goals, thus becoming life-long learners. You would often see Mr. Kalbach on the playground engaging with the students at recess. He was known to join in games, talk with the children about their ideas for recess activities, and/or positively involve himself in conflict resolution. He was also someone that students having a tough day could count on to help work through their troubles. Hard work and determination, mixed with kindness and a feeling of self worth are important to student achievement and success. Mr. Kalbach modeled these qualities and encouraged the same from students both in and outside of his classroom. It is for all these reasons that I recommend Hans Kalbach for the Franklin Mint Excellence in Teaching Award.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 72**

*Application 8 of 9 for Hans Kalbach*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Hans Kalbach

**Position:** 4th grade teacher

**School:** Media Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Maureen A Naylor

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Hans Kalbach is a graduate of West Chester University. He began his career teaching at St. Madelines teaching second-grade for three years before being hired by Rose Tree Media School District. Hans taught 2nd grade for 17 years and has now taught 4th grade for the last 3 years. Since the summer of 2002 to present Hans has worked at Adventure Day Camp and he has served as the director for the past 19 years.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Hans treats all the students, staff and families with respect, kindness, and empathy. By modeling positive interpersonal skills, he creates a classroom environment where his students feel safe and valued. He can be found working with students during his lunch and playing with them at recess. Mr. Kalbach makes an effort to know what each of his students is interested in and engages them in conversation and makes them and their opinions feel valued.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Kalbach demonstrates a genuine passion for his subject matter. I had the pleasure of being a grade partner with Hans when he was first hired. He was open to collaboration and always willing to share ideas. Hans's enthusiasm is contagious, motivating both students and colleagues to be curious and engaged in their own learning. I currently coteach phonics with Hans and he actively engages the students in chants, choral responses, and mnemonic devices to help them learn and retain the information. His efforts lead to student success.

Hans is working on an initiative to get materials and a space set up on the recess yard that caters to students who lean more to imaginative or creative play. They can role play, put on a puppet show, complete a craft, or play a board/card game.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Hans fosters excellence in the classroom and serves as a positive role model for his students. He contributes significantly to creating a nurturing and inspiring learning environment. Mr. Kalbach helps students develop not only academic skills but also essential life skills that will serve them well beyond the classroom. He encourages academic risk taking and making mistakes. Hans always remains flexible as evident by how he adapted when he was transferred to a different grade level. He modeled for his students the importance of resilience and problem-solving. Hans had taught many of these students as second graders and those he did not teach knew him from how he directed Community Day activities that are a highlight of their second-grade experience. This flexibility and resilience becomes a valuable life skill that extends beyond the classroom.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 73**

*Application 9 of 9 for Hans Kalbach*

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Hans Kalbach

**Position:** teacher

**School:** Media Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Rose Tree Media School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Alexis Lopatin

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** parent of student

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Hans was my son's teacher for both 2nd and 4th grade

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

My son can be a challenging student. There were many days during 2nd grade (mostly virtual due to covid-19) that Hans reached out to me for ways to support my son during these difficult days. My son and I both cheered out loud when we found out that Hans would be his 4th grade teacher as well. My son often came home with anecdotes about Hans sitting down with him personally to check in and get to the bottom of my son's various struggles. Hans also always kept me informed of what was happening with my son at school and shared techniques he found that worked to keep my son focused.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

I have sat in meetings with Hans and other school personnel to address my son's issues where Hans was informative and offered extremely helpful suggestions.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

My son has always looked up to Hans! He seems to have this magical ability to be both the most strict and the most funny of all the teachers at the school. This balance kept my son eager to be in the classroom every day. My son still says "well, Mr. Kalbach says...." a year later.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 74**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Erin Bohannon

**Position:** 8th Grade Math Teacher

**School:** Harris Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Southeast Delco School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Michael Bohannon

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Husband

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Erin achieved her bachelors from PENN State University. She was able to acquire her masters in education from Neumann University while being top in her class. She is currently paused in her pursuit of a PhD in Education, allowing me to obtain my bachelors.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Erin goes above and beyond for her students while also raise 4 children of her own. Her work is not limited to the classroom, as she makes it a priority to make it students extracurricular activities that sometimes fall on Saturdays and Sundays. The joy I see in her students faces when they see us out shopping or at a family functions shows to just how much of a positive impact she has on their lives.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

By working as a cohesive unit and approaching teaching with a holistic approach.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

By leading by example. Showing that through any circumstances, there is always a solution.



## APPLICATION NUMBER: 75

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Katie McDermott

**Position:** First Grade Teacher

**School:** Sharon Hill School

**School District if applicable:** Southeast Delco School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Danny Ruane

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor (Assistant Principal)

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Miss McDermott has been a first grade teacher at Sharon Hill School in Southeast Delco School District for 8 years. She holds degrees in Early Childhood Education (Pre-K to 4) and Reading Specialist. Miss McDermott has a stellar reputation across the school as a cutting-edge educator. Her grade partners and colleagues gravitate to her for insight, wisdom, and technology support. Under Miss McDermott's leadership and coaching, Sharon Hill School's Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) program has earned state fidelity recognition at Hershey for two consecutive years.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Miss McDermott goes above and beyond to make sure that every student finds success in her classroom and reaches their highest level of success. Miss McDermott brings the utmost empathy to her daily interactions with students and their families. She offers a caring, understanding, and empowering environment for all her students. When dealing with students, Miss McDermott displays patience, determination, compassion, and warmth daily. Miss McDermott shows a love, passion, and enthusiasm for learning that

is shared with all of her students. Every student is guaranteed to leave Miss McDermott's classroom with a deeper understanding and appreciation for reading, writing, and math. Miss McDermott is a true advocate for all of her students. She is constantly speaking up to make sure that her students receiving services (Special Education, Speech, OT, etc.) receive them daily. Not only does she hold her students accountable; but she also holds her colleagues to task when it comes to servicing her students. Miss McDermott has worked through Donors Choose and Teacher Teammates to make sure her students have all the materials they need. She has received small group instruction materials, a classroom carpet, classroom prizes, and classroom incentives. Miss McDermott has also connected with companies such as Herr to receive donations for her students and the school.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Miss McDermott's dedication to the profession is exemplary. She possesses a strong work ethic and a set of organizational skills that allow her to perform all of her duties competently and efficiently. Miss McDermott's lesson planning, knowledge of the curriculum, resourcefulness, and array of instructional skills are exceptional. All of her lessons are carefully developed to include multiple strategies for differentiating instruction to meet the needs of individual students. Miss McDermott constantly looks for ways to improve her craft while providing engaging lessons for her students. She utilizes the Smart Board and Chromebooks to enhance her instruction daily. Most of Miss McDermott's day is organized through Google Slides so students always know what is going on. Her lessons are engaging and fun. Miss McDermott has also shared her knowledge of Smart Boards, Google Classroom, and Power School with staff members at various trainings and PLCs.

Miss McDermott has created a sensory corner as well as a calming corner in her room to help two individual students who are struggling with their emotions. She seeks out individual support to make sure these students are successful.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Miss McDermott is involved in the school community. In addition to teaching, she is a key member of the leadership team where her guidance, wisdom, and resourcefulness are heavily relied on as we move the school forward. Miss McDermott has been the driving force behind bringing PBIS to Sharon Hill School. When I started here four years

ago, Sharon Hill only had PBIS on paper. After speaking with Miss McDermott, she agreed to serve as the co-coach for PBIS. She led the core team to develop a matrix and set expectations for a virtual rollout. Once we returned to in-person learning, Miss McDermott was instrumental in the school-wide PBIS rollout. She planned and led the monthly meetings; organized fundraisers that brought in thousands of dollars; made community connections that brought in additional resources; and led the team to Tier I recognition with the state. Under Miss McDermott's leadership, the PBIS team has received state recognition for implementation fidelity from Hershey for the second year in a row. This summer, we will be creating and training a Tier II Team. Her hard work and dedication have improved student behavior and overall school morale at Sharon Hill School.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 76**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Meghan Gordon

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Delcroft School

**School District if applicable:** Southeast Delco School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** LeAnne Hudson

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

I first met Mrs. Meghan Gordon when I became Assistant Principal at Delcroft School, in Southeast Delco School District, in August 2013. She quickly proved herself an important asset to the school. I am now the Grant Administrator for Southeast Delco School District and I have the privilege of working with Mrs. Gordon again. In addition to teaching 3rd grade during the day, Mrs. Gordon is the Lead Teacher for the After School Program at Delcroft School. I supervise the After School Program and I was quickly reminded of how valuable Mrs. Gordon is to our students, Delcroft School, the entire Southeast Delco School District, and to our community.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

When I was supervising Mrs. Gordon in my role as Assistant Principal from 2013-2015, it was apparent that Mrs. Gordon has an extensive knowledge of her content area, the ability to relate to the students and parents in a professional manner, and goes above and beyond to guarantee that every child has the best educational experience possible. Mrs. Gordon would greet every student with a smile, participate in school activities that

happened outside of the school day, and created meaningful relationships with colleagues, students, and stake holders. Currently, Mrs. Gordon is extremely effective in her role as Lead Teacher of the After School Program. She oversees the program to make sure the students have fun and educational lessons, completes all of the state mandated paperwork before the deadlines, and makes sure staff members follow all safety precautions to create a warm and safe learning environment. Mrs. Gordon also helped facilitate our Black History Month Poster/Book Contest and supported our Awards Assembly for Academic Achievement and Perfect Attendance.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

We have four buildings that run the same after school program, however, last year we were being audited and Delcroft School received multiple compliments on how well the program was being run. Mrs. Gordon is the Lead Teacher of the program and she runs a flawless program. In order for our other school to grow and flourish, I have encouraged staff members from other buildings to shadow Delcroft School for an afternoon. Mrs. Gordon has been very supportive and answers questions that are posed by other teachers in other buildings. Mrs. Gordon wants our programs and buildings to thrive and does whatever she can to help support our district. This summer Mrs. Gordon took time away from her family to attend a conference in New Orleans to obtain information about how to enhance our programs. Mrs. Gordon is always looking for ways to improve her teaching techniques and our programs.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Since the After School Program is for students in grades 1-5, Mrs. Gordon's ability to flawlessly oversee and support the teachers and students in the program demonstrates her natural leadership ability and her flexibility to academically support different grade levels. Due to Mrs. Meghan Gordon's amazing teaching abilities and her genuine love for her students, the students in the After School Program are thriving. Parents and students have both expressed their appreciation for Mrs. Gordon's passion for teaching, commitment to education, and the safety of all students. Thank you for considering Mrs. Meghan Gordon for the Excellence in Teaching Award.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 77**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Shannon

**Position:** First Grade Teacher

**School:** Harris School

**School District if applicable:** Southeast Delco School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Michael

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mrs. Hargrove has 11 years of teaching experience in lower-socio economic schools. Mrs. Hargrove has been teaching early elementary aged students through her tenure as a school teacher. Currently, Mrs. Hargrove teaches first grade students and is certified to teach kindergarten through sixth grade and Reading.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Each morning, Mrs. Hargrove begins her day by greeting her students at the door. Through the Responsive Classroom model, Mrs. Hargrove pre-plans her lessons on her interactive Smartboard to discuss main points as they relate to social and emotional learning of her students. Every day, it is evident that Mrs. Hargrove's students are learning more and more about regulating their own emotions. Mrs. Hargrove's students are proud of themselves as exhibit safe, responsible and respectful behaviors that tie into PBIS.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Hargroves lessons and plans are truly well thought out and incorporate the needs of each child. Mrs. Hargrove works closely with her grade partners who all do a great job bouncing ideas off of each other to benefit our first grade students. Mrs. Hargrove's efforts in working with small groups of learners is a testament of assessing her learners needs and working with classroom aides and interventionists.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Hargrove is a true role model to her students. This is evident in her students who come up to me daily in the lunch room to let me know of all the learning that takes place in their classroom. For example, one student came to me recently to tell me how proud of himself he was because he was rewarded for making good decisions in the classroom. Mrs. Hargrove is constantly giving "Knight Notes" (PBIS Dollars) to her students who are being safe, responsible and respectful.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 78**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Jenna Matyszczak

**Position:** Special Education Teacher

**School:** Springfield Literacy Center

**School District if applicable:** Springfield School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Daniel Tracy

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Kindergarten and 1st grade

Special education - Complex Learner Classroom

Special Education Pre-K to 8 and Regular Education Pre-K - 4

Currently participating in a year long professional development opportunity focused on meeting the needs of students with complex learning needs.

Trained in Unique Learning Systems curriculum

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Jenna's commitment to the students in her classroom is inspiring. She leads the team in the classroom by example, demonstrating patience, determination, problem solving, and self reflection. With her leadership, the team has made significant progress in developing a program that meets the needs of the students. There have also been significant gains by the students in her class including students communicating with



their augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, their social interactions with peers in the school, and reading and math skills.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Jenna has created an inclusive classroom setting and school environment where her students thrive, by ensuring staff are equipped to facilitate meaningful opportunities for students to learn and interact with their peers and adults in the building. One way she does this is by collaborating with the speech therapist in her building. Together, they have worked to display Core Boards throughout the building so that staff and students can communicate with our AAC users and complex language students. The addition of Core Boards throughout the school environment has helped to make sure all students have equal access to educational opportunities and guarantees all students feel welcome and respected.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Jenna believes her students are capable of great success. She advocates for them in the school and finds opportunities to have students participate in the regular education classes. Jenna is constantly evaluating the success of the classroom and making changes to better meet the changing needs of her students. The program is truly individualized to the needs of her students.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 79**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** AJ Bianchi

**Position:** High School Teacher

**School:** Upper Darby High School

**School District if applicable:** Upper Darby School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Samuel Garr

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Student/Teacher

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

This teacher taught both myself (class of 2018) and my brother (class of 2025) and she has made an impact on both of our lives. She has taught us how to love learning and which ways work for us as well as make sure we feel safe, welcomed, and loved when in her presence. She deserves this award more than anybody. She goes above and beyond for her students and cares deeply.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

She checks in on me even years after graduating, has supported me through my transitional journey, and helps in any and every way she is capable.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Aj has stood up for students, helped guide and educate her fellow teachers how to make students feel safe and welcomed and gives love and support to all staff and faculty.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

This teacher teaches not only multiple grades and subjects throughout her years at Upper Darby but also teaches kindness, respect, and compassion for others and incorporates that into her teaching.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 80**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Emily Stewart

**Position:** Science Teacher

**School:** Upper Darby High School

**School District if applicable:** Upper Darby School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Matthew Alloway

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Emily Stewart has been a teacher at Upper Darby High School since the 2006-07 school year. She has contributed 17 years to UDHS, and is often cited as one of the reasons teachers enjoy working here. She joined us with a BS from Gwynedd Mercy College. In 2015 she earned her M.Ed. from Neumann University. Emily holds a certificate in Special Education and in Biology. Regarding achievement - In 2008 her classroom was selected as a site for the Classrooms For the Future Grant, hosting politicians to observe a cutting-edge instructional environment.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Prior professional evaluations have put it best when they highlight, "one cannot leave an interaction with Emily Stewart without feeling positive and upbeat." Emily continuously challenges herself, participating in voluntary professional development, observing peers within and outside of her department, to learn teaching strategies, sending invitations to district and building administrators to invite us to observe cool and engaging upcoming lessons, or volunteering as a mentor, a contributor to the district professional

development plan, or assisting as a representative on the induction committee. Without releasing too much personal information, Emily Stewart has often been cited as a safe adult at school when counselors are planning personal safety plans for children who struggle at school. In a recent major event, a student who was experiencing a personal crisis, outside of school and outside of the regular school calendar, went to Emily for support. Emily pulled together crisis resources and was the driver of supports to that individual student, reflecting who she is in the scope of a child's life. Separately, Emily has shown the love and care she demonstrates for her students to her colleagues at school. Emily has selflessly given to those who need support both professionally and personally.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Starting in 2011 Emily Stewart was identified as a mentor teacher. Working each year to help new teachers find their voice, Emily has always been there either formally as a mentor, or informally as a resource for veteran teachers. Additionally, Mrs. Stewart created a peer-observation professional learning community (PLC), encouraging herself and others to visit classrooms to watch lessons and learn promising instructional strategies. This practice is not without its difficulties. Teachers have to be comfortable grappling with difficult content, instruction, or students, on public display for their colleagues. Mrs. Stewart leads by example, always hosting others in her classroom space, and often inviting others to come and check out the lessons going on in her classroom. In 2013 the district curriculum department invited Emily Stewart to be a representative on developing the Teacher Induction Program, planning professional learning opportunities for new teachers district-wide. Her participation in this committee was entirely voluntary, taking time away from her family while planning development for others. For a number of years, in addition to her regular teaching responsibilities, she contributed as a Student Activities Director, planning events, and running the student government.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Stewart is a role model to her students for a number of reasons.

She is persistently professional. Emily Stewart plans outstanding lessons, is prepared consistently, and has an exemplary record of attendance at school and at professional development. She challenges herself and her colleagues to continuously develop through her "Inside-out Peer Observation" group. Emily contributes to the district professional development plan, and supports new teachers through mentoring.

She is 100% positive - Although not every day is sunny, Mrs. Stewart does not espouse a defeatist mentality. She takes setbacks in stride, looking at creative solutions to challenging problems. She encourages her students in the same way, recognizing their feelings, but also encouraging them to think towards the future with optimism, controlling what they can, and working towards goals.

She expresses kindness - The most important person in a child's life is someone who is kind and makes the child feel seen and heard. Emily sees the good in every child, which is not always the easiest to do when and where older kids protect themselves with a tough exterior.

Her instruction and classroom environment is challenging but also fun - Emily Stewart regularly sends student projects to her administrative team, encouraging students to demonstrate pride in their work, while also opening her classroom to visitors. She plans fun and engaging activities, including dissections, and "wound clinics" for students studying Biology, and Anatomy & Physiology. In addition, she regularly adds a multidisciplinary approach to instruction, incorporating her special education background, by delivering instruction on reading strategies within her content-area classroom.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 81**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Joanne Jao

**Position:** 8th Grade English and Language Arts Teacher

**School:** Beverly Hills Middle School

**School District if applicable:** Upper Darby School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Aaron Smith

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Ms. Jao is entering into her fourth year of teaching, all at Beverly Hills Middle School. She was originally hired as a Reading Specialist. Her certification is a English 7-12 Instructional I cert.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Ms. Jao creates a class culture that is inviting and displays a high level of expectations of learning. She provides additional opportunities for students to meet with her to better improve their reading skills and supports students interest through advising them to literature that they can read.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Jao works well with all her grade level teachers. She lesson plans, provides input into other teachers plans and accepts feedback from her peers and supervisors. As a

young teacher, she volunteers her time and talents to whatever activities students are involved in to help promote a quality learning experience for all students.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Jao is a former student of the Upper Darby School District and community member and uses that to speak to student about how they can use education to help fulfill whatever goals they have. She is able to use her childhood experiences in her instruction to help students connect to the content in which they are learning.



## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 82**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** James Donahue

**Position:** Fifth Grade Teacher

**School:** Garrettford Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Upper Darby School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Allen Brydges

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Building Principal

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

I would like to nominate James Donahue to receive the FMFCU Excellence in Teaching Award.

Jim Donahue, a man whose roots grow deep in the Upper Darby community, is a fifth-grade teacher at Garrettford Elementary School. Mr. Donahue grew up in Drexel Hill, where he attended Upper Darby schools and played soccer. While a student at West Chester University, Mr. Donahue student taught at Garrettford with Mrs. Larkin, a past FMFCU honoree. He began working in the school district at Stonehurst Elementary in 2002 and remained in that school until 2013. It was at Stonehurst where Jim met his wife, a fellow teacher, and they began their family. He transferred to Garrettford for the 2013-14 school year. Mr. Donahue is a Master's level teacher, having earned his MS from Wilkes-Barre University.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mr. Donahue not only serves as a fifth-grade teacher at Garrettford Elementary, he is the Coach of the Running Club, in charge of the school safeties and also moderates the

Chess Club. Teaching fifth grade can be very challenging. The students are at a stage in their lives and educational journey where everything is changing. They are growing and their bodies are developing; they are experiencing feelings that are new and curious. The work they are learning is becoming more challenging and they are being held to higher expectations. They must wonder, "What is going on?" After all, they are only kids and just want to have fun! Lucky for Mr. Donahue's fifth grade students, that is still possible. He has a skill for developing relationships with his students and they know what he expects at all times, but they also realize he is there to support them in achieving their goals. He makes learning fun and is extremely patient. He also recognizes the uniqueness of each of his students. They, in turn, recognize his commitment to them, the school and the community, and with that the relationships blossom.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Donahue's sense of humor is unmatched, and it is a tool he needs in his toolbox every day. Henry Ward Beecher stated, "A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs. It's jolted by every pebble on the road." The road from fifth grade to Middle School has many pebbles, rocks, and even a boulder or two along the way. However, Mr. Donahue's sense of humor helps him to guide his students to the next stop on their journey. Often Jim's sense of humor is a respite for staff members having a challenging day. He has a skill for recognizing the good in or uniqueness of challenges and can spur us all to keep on keeping on.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

As a Coach of the Running Club, Mr. Donahue works after school with students in grades four and five. The students prepare for a 5K to be held in May each year. The approach is not only a physical strengthening and endurance activity, it involves goal setting and working towards that end, as well as working as a team. Running Club, therefore, is a multi-faceted skill builder. This activity is an opportunity for students who may not be athletically talented to still take part, build confidence and realize a personal achievement.

Mr. Donahue works with fifth- grade students with Chess Club. This activity helps the students to learn critical thinking and planning ahead, all while having fun. Jim

makes the activity interesting with a tournament at the end. He develops a bracket system much like what is used in the NCAA Championship, narrowing the group down to a final chess champion. The excitement grows each week as the students compete for the crown. There is also a lot of good hearted teasing between me and Mr. Donahue. I played college basketball and never miss an opportunity to point out that Jim is a soccer player and not an expert in the bracket system!!! The students enjoy the teasing!

Mr. Donahue also works to make the fifth grade final assembly a special and memorable event for the students. This past year, he created a backdrop for a picture wall for the event.

Mr. Donahue puts a tremendous amount of effort into teaching, mentoring and developing his students. He is a positive force in a community that faces many challenges. He makes a difference every day and deserves to be honored for his excellence in teaching.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 83**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kaitlin Weircioch

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Hillcrest

**School District if applicable:** Upper Darby School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Susan Campbell

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Kaitlin is a graduate of Temple University. This is her second year teaching third grade at Hillcrest Elementary School.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Kaitlin continues to put students first. She has a warm welcoming classroom where her students thrive under her instruction. She focuses on educating the whole child and is very aware of student needs, both emotionally and educationally.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

As a new teacher, Kaitlin is well beyond her years. She is a teacher who develops a well organized classroom and is willing to assist other teachers with recommendations on how to implement organizational techniques that fit the other teachers needs and classroom environment. In addition, she has sought out positions within the school to

enhance her teaching experience and support our internal programs. She has willingly joined the Equity Committee and readily volunteers for other school program needs.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Kaitlin is seeking advanced education to increase her professional skills and allow herself to become a teacher leader in the building. She encourages her students to try new things and experience as much as they can in her classroom.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 84**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Maureen Mylotte

**Position:** Reading Specialist

**School:** Highland Park Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Upper Darby School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Maureen Mylotte

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal/Reading Specialist

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Maureen Mylotte

Undergraduate degree from East Stroudsburg University

Early Childhood Education

Elementary Education

Master's Equivalency- Reading Specialist K-12 from Cabrini University

Over 28 +years teaching experience

First few years in NJ, over 26 years in Upper Darby School District

1st grade @ Highland Park

Lead Teacher @ Highland Park

Upper Darby School District Reading/ELA Coach

Reading Specialist @ Highland Park

**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Maureen Mylotte goes above and beyond every single day!

Her classroom is welcoming and is continuously updated.

She buys books regularly for her room and also shares them with her students.

She sets high expectations for her students' success and uses multiple strategies to guide them to reach their goals. She celebrates all of her students' successes along the way!

She is an extremely active PBIS leader in the building. She is always looking for engaging ways to promote positive behavior. Maureen leads the monthly student of the month assembly and makes sure that every student feels great about themselves.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Maureen is extremely knowledgeable and shares her expertise with her colleagues. Everyone in the building and across the district knows they can reach out and ask Maureen for help in the classroom or for anything else.

Last school year she mentored 4 new 1st grade teachers. She met with them regularly and visited their classrooms to help them learn the curriculum and to guide them with best practices to enhance their lessons and engage students .

She still works closely with the district ELA/Reading supervisor to review data and programs to best support our students across the district.

Maureen continuously reviews data and changes her instruction accordingly.

She continues to be the "go to " person when someone wants help with teaching strategies. Her guidance during our weekly Student Support Team meetings is invaluable.

Everyone who has worked with her throughout her career will tell you that they are better teachers and people because of Maureen.

She inspires everyone to be their best selves!

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Maureen Mylotte is truly an amazing role model for EVERYONE!

She is always kind, mild mannered, positive, encouraging, inclusive, and reliable.

She greets every student and staff member with a smile.

Maureen highlights students with various hallway displays.

She enhanced our student of the month assemblies with a red carpet, positive decor, and added rewards.

She is an extremely hard worker and always looks for new ways to continuously help and encourage students!

In addition to being a PBIS leader and facilitator, Maureen also leads our staff Sunshine Club which also spreads joy and happiness.

Maureen embodies everything that makes being a teacher special! She embraces teaching as a vocation not as a job/career. She is passionate about teaching and her purpose is focused on children becoming strong readers, academically successful, and kind leaders!



## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 85**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kristy Foley

**Position:** 2nd Grade Teacher

**School:** Bywood

**School District if applicable:** Upper Darby School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Janet Newby

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Administrator

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Kristy has been teaching at Bywood Elementary for at least twenty years. Kristy is one of six second-grade teachers. She teaches all core subjects.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Kristy is a teacher who creates amazing lessons and holds her second graders to a high standard. Her students have made immense growth in reading fluency since the beginning of the school year.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Kristy is a team player who is always willing to help out and mentor any teacher in our building. Her door is always open for teachers to conduct a peer learning walk through her classroom. She is an amazing listener and always gives good advice to her colleagues.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Kristy builds amazing relationships with her students. She uses positive teacher language throughout her lessons and conversations with her students. She is compassionate and loving towards her students. The students know what expectations Kristy holds them to which creates a positive and productive classroom.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 86**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Rebecca Andrews

**Position:** 2nd Grade Teacher

**School:** Highland Park Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Upper Darby School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Jasmine Jeannis

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Rebecca is a 2nd grade teacher at Upper Darby School district. She actually went through Upper Darby School District her whole academic life and now teaches at the elementary level, which I think is such a success story.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Rebecca goes above and beyond with everything she does, she is an outstanding cultivator of positivity, she is loving, nurturing and puts in extra effort to make her classroom a true community and safe space. She is a great team mate and sounding board on the days we may need a little help.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

A first year teacher had such an overwhelming class and would go home in tears almost everyday. Becky took the time to support her with curriculum and building a more

structured classroom style. She helped turn that teachers year around, which is amazing.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 87**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Tanya McMullen

**Position:** 1st Grade Teacher

**School:** Primos Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Upper Darby School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Matthew Casertano

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Tanya McMullen has been teaching in the Upper Darby School District for over 25 years. Tanya's students all show significant progress across all content areas throughout an entire school year.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

The classroom environment that Tanya creates on a yearly basis is evident throughout the Primos community. Each summer multiple parents call and request their children be in Tanya's class. This is the reputation she has built for herself in this community.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Tanya has taken the challenge of being a teacher mentor each school year. She works with our younger teachers in helping them facilitate grading, instruction, and overall planning throughout each school year. This is additional time required each day. Tanya has taken this challenge on with fidelity each school year.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

The way Tanya McMullen carries herself on a daily basis is contagious to all of her students. Tanya has barely missed 5 school days in the past 5 years. She shows up everyday committed to her children and helping them strive to become fluent readers.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 88**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Lisa Cobb

**Position:** 8th Grade Science (20 years)

**School:** Strath Haven Middle School

**School District if applicable:** Wallingford Swarthmore School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Antoinette Barrett

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** My child was her student

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Name of Nominee: Lisa Cobb  
Years of Teaching: 23  
Current Position in the District: 8th Grade Science (20 years)

Certifications: Secondary (7-12): General Science, Physics, Chemistry, Biology

Extra Activity Involvement (i.e. supplemental positions):

-Fall Drama Co-Director -2 years-Coordinator for SHMS Black History Celebration from 2004 - 2023-Coordinator/Planner for MLK Day of Service 2006 - 2023-Science Olympiad Coach 2009-2017-Team Leader (Discovery) 2013 - current- Robotics Coach 2022 - Current-Diversity Club advisory 2004 - Current

Extra Services Rendered (no compensation):

-MLK Day of Service Coordinator/Planner -10 years-Science Olympiad Advisor/Coach -3 years-Diversity Club -10 years-Coordinator for 8th Grade Dance - 2 years-8th Grade Dance Decorator - 8 years-Coach for Step Team -10 years-Lunch Connections Group Coordinator -2 years-8th Grade Service Project -8 years-Black History Club Advisor – 10 years-WSEA Building Rep

Committee Work:

-WSEA Negotiations Committee -SHMS Connections Committee-SAP (Student Assistant Program) Trainer -7 years

Other Honors Received:

-Wallingford Swarthmore SD Teacher of Excellence 2003- 2004, 2015-2016-Science Olympiad Outstanding Regional Coach Award 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010-Science Olympiad Outstanding State Coach Award 2008, 2012 -Outstanding Community Service Award-NSTA National Science Teacher Association Presenter 2023-Science Enrichment Summer camp -16 years-PTA President (5 years) Secretary(2 years) for Carrcroft Elementary School, DE -Parent Council Board Member for Brandywine School Dist. -3 years- ACS (American Chemical Society) member-NTSA (National Science Teacher Association) member

**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Lisa Harrison Cobb has gone above and beyond in her role as a Cultural Proficiency teacher leader during the 2022-2023 school year. She served as a general resource for the school community on matters of Cultural Proficiency, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. Lisa attended all collaboration meetings and district service planning sessions, and she also designed and led professional development training. She coordinated and supported an affinity and ally group for students and parents, organizing discussions and activities that promoted belonging and affirmation. Lisa facilitated engagement with guest speakers, organized high school tours, and collaborated with high school mentors. She also planned and coordinated various cultural celebrations and events. Lisa initiated open dialogues and collaborated with other teams to include DEI-related lessons. She worked closely with principals, consultants, and central office administration to support the tenets of cultural proficiency. Lisa played a crucial role in implementing district-wide equity goals and collaborated with external consultants on strategies for teacher training and school-wide activities. Overall, Lisa Harrison Cobb has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting Cultural Proficiency, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging at SHMS.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Cobb collaborated with Principals, Consultants, and central office administration to further increase and support tenets of Cultural Proficiency, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. Supported culturally responsive school leadership behaviors promoting critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curricula, culturally responsive school environments, and engaging students and parents/guardians in community contexts.



Ms. Cobb was instrumental with the team in implementing WSSD Equity Goals-per-district audits and data analysis. SHMS CPETL met monthly to plan and discuss goals and events. She partnered with external consultant(s) Dr. Horsey, Dr. Tim Fox, and Laine Whitaker, MSL on strategies to follow up on teacher training during professional development, and activities and ideas for the affinity groups and school-wide activities to promote Cultural Proficiency, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Cobb coordinated and supported an affinity and ally group for students and parents. She was active in coordinating discussion debriefings for the affinity group for faculty, and staff. Ms. Cobb advised student groups to empower, educate, and involve the students in Cultural Proficiency, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. The BIPOC GROUP sessions at SHMS were held weekly, by grade levels (6th, 7th, and 8th grade) during their lunch periods. In addition, there were whole group sessions once a month from October to June. The group engaged in meaningful activities that helped to promote belonging and affirming. There was a parent engagement component and a community guest speaker at times. We provided a safe place where middle school students could express how they felt about middle school events, culture, classes, etc. For example, the students enjoyed engaging in discussions with Dr. C. Horsey (District consultant), Mr. Anthony Myers (Former student), the NAACP President (current student), and the group teacher leaders (Mrs. Lebess, Ms. Roane, Ms. Brandi Johnson, and Mrs. Faith Jones (Parent)). The group also attended high school tours, collaborated with High School mentors (YAC and National Honor Society members), participated in vision board sessions, and cultural trips, and assisted in planning the District Martin Luther King Day of Service, Black History Month, Pride Month, AAPI, and Juneteenth events. The goal next year (23.24) is to expand the BIPOC parent involvement, schedule more enrichment speakers, explore more resources for our Muslim, & AAPI members, and build on the enrichment activities. There is also an SHMS Cultural Proficient Equity Student Ambassadors group that meets every day during 8th-grade lunch. These students dialog about current social issues and how they affect the SHMS environment. Moreover, the group actively advocates for equality and supports being an "Upstander" in the presence of injustices around the school. The group designed and coordinated a presentation (with the help of Eleanor Salgado 8th grade teacher) given to the

elementary school for their "words matter" assembly. They will also be leading the SHMS Word Matter assembly.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 89**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Valerie Szeliga

**Position:** Biology Teacher

**School:** Strath Haven High School

**School District if applicable:** Wallingford Swarthmore School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Andrea LaPira

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Building Admin

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Valerie Szeliga has been teaching Biology and Environmental Science at Strath Haven High School since 2004. She has been acknowledged by the district with a number of "Spirit of Haven" Awards due to her sustained and significant commitment to her colleagues and student body. This past summer, she was accepted to the SET Sail Program through the USNA STEM Center for Education and Outreach at the US Naval Academy, a premier opportunity for teachers of STEM.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Valerie engages her students from bell to bell. She enthusiastically greets students by name at the door, and they see her excitement to teach them every day. Her creativity is unmatched, and she finds unique ways to inspire students to learn (ie. a homemade cupcake display of the periodic table!). When I observe her classroom, students are actively doing science, and can explain what they are learning and how it connects to objectives. She is the perfect balance of holding students to high expectations and simultaneously showing them love and compassion. She has a particular interest in

differentiated instruction and the use of technology to meet the wide range of needs of her students. More importantly, she is a model of integrity and good character, using "teenage moments" as teaching and learning opportunities for students. They admire and respect her because she values them as people.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Valerie is the heart and soul of our school climate. Not only does she engage in extracurriculars for students (Marching Band/Danceline, MiniThon, Student Council, among others), she is an instructional leader and is at the forefront of building initiatives (currently, the transition to Schoology). She is the artist and designer of every bulletin board in our building, representing our diverse student population in creative ways. In addition to her contributions to the building climate, Valerie mentors new teachers - officially, but often unofficially as well - and takes the lead on curriculum development among her peers. She leads our "Sunshine" team, and when a faculty member or family is in need, Valerie is the first to organize a meal train, gift card drive, or whatever is needed. Valerie is top notch in every aspect of her job, but also a friend, cheerleader, and listening ear to everyone who knows her.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

By nature of her strong sense of integrity, Valerie is a role model because she not only teaches students content, she teaches them the important soft skills like manners, eye contact, respect, and communication. She recognizes the importance of teaching the humans she entrusted with every day and seeks to nurture their growth and maturity. Valerie also includes students' personal experiences in the classroom. For example, after a recent environmental science lesson a student approached Valerie to share pictures from a trip which related to the lesson. Valerie's first instinct was to ask the student if she could share the picture with the class. In short, Valerie is one of the most inclusive teachers. She is always looking for ways to include students both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 90**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Michelle Slaven

**Position:** Special Education Teacher

**School:** Ardmore Ave Elementary

**School District if applicable:** William Penn School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Tamiko Laurie

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co-worker

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mrs. Michelle Slaven has been employed with the William Penn School District for sixteen years. Mrs. Slaven is currently teaching at Ardmore Ave Elementary as a special education teacher. Mrs. Slaven is the Learning Support Teacher for grades K-2 and the school's Special Education Liaison. She holds a certification in the following areas: Elementary K-6, Reading Specialist K-12 and Special Education N-12.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

As I have observed Mrs. Slaven during her pull out and push in with her scholars she is a strong advocate of hands on and minds on learning. I like this approach because it's supplementing curriculum with a variety of activities is essential to the learning process. Mrs. Slaven is always striving to remain a strong source of nurturing support, encouraging the scholars to do their best. I have witnessed her go the extra mile to build a relationship that is honest, open and respectful with their families as well.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

I am a new teacher to the William Penn School District and Mrs. Slaven has been a wonderful help to me and others. I have asked her if she has any suggestions or current methods/techniques based on recognized principles of teaching special education and her response was: It's important for the SPED teacher to create a positive and culturally sensitive classroom environment, where the student can see themselves as members of the community. As SPED teachers we must familiarize ourselves with all cultural backgrounds of the students because it enables us to make connections to the students.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

As I continue to observe and work along side Mrs. Slaven, I have seen her commitment to work as hard as necessary and spend as much time as needed to make all scholars feel successful, both academically and emotionally. The scholars feel like they matter inside her classroom. She has created a classroom environment where the instruction meets the needs of each scholar feel safe and secure. Mrs. Slaven is one who comes early or stay late to help all scholars and staff. She is the first person outside during our dismissal looking out for our daycare providers.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 91**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Amanda Simiriglio

**Position:** 5th Grade Teacher

**School:** Walnut Street Elementary

**School District if applicable:** William Penn School District

**County of School:** Delaware County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Joseph Williams

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mrs. Smiriglio has been a member of the Walnut Street Elementary staff for 7 years. Prior to her tenure in William Penn she worked at Chester Community Charter for 3 years. She currently teaches English Language Arts but has experience in teaching all subjects. She has been the advisor of students who have been awarded countywide achievements in writing and local achievements in art. She currently serves as our school's newspaper advisor and has spent numerous years supporting student council.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mrs. Simiriglio ensures that her students have an array of experiences. One thing she prides herself on is organizing opportunities outside of school to extend student learning. She has been intentional in planning field trips at least once every two months. These excursions connect learning to real life experiences and helps to build social connections amongst her students and meaningful relationships with her. Planning these trips is no small feat. In addition to ensuring she's managing instructional time appropriately, she also has to ensure that the cost of the trip is feasible for her

families. Fundraisers have been held to make "tripping" a reality. Students return to school excited and share their positive experiences. These events are discussed even after students have moved on to 6th grade. During lunch this year one student discussed how they missed being able to connect socially with their friends during trips and how much fun Mrs. Simiriglio's class was. Mrs. Simiriglio doesn't hesitate to advocate for her students or provide resources. There have been numerous occasions where clothing and school supplies were readily available for her children in person and via delivery. Her students are very important to her.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Simiriglio is part of a dynamic 5th grade team. She plans exciting experiences and activities to enhance learning for all students. There's always projects and opportunities for students to present what they have learned. Students are well versed in using Google slides to demonstrate their learning. From exploring states to demonstrating knowledge of the political process, students are provided methods to show what they know. Mrs. Simiriglio's classroom is homely and the atmosphere is that of a close knit family. Most recently she supported a colleague new to the profession who was struggling in her own classroom. She reassured her that her struggle was part of becoming a great educator as she herself had a similar experience. She provided a respite for her and took over instruction until her colleague was ready to return. Her colleague was very thankful for the support and returned to her class rejuvenated, knowing that when challenges presented themselves, she has someone to lean on. Being a mentor teacher is a strength for Mrs. Simiriglio.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Simirilo is very connected to her students and their families. She spends time outside of school hours talking with parents to ensure her students are in a good place and to support parental needs. She consistently models respectful behavior and builds meaningful relationships with her students. The girls admire Mrs. Simiriglio. She spends time making sure that they realize their potential and can count on her in times of challenge. She has conducted many "family" meetings, modeling her vulnerability with a focus on making good decisions. The impact is evident in the way her girls carry



themselves and in their interaction with her. Her male students consider her a mother figure. She's provides tough love and it's effective.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 92**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Krista McKiernan

**Position:** Kindergarten

**School:** St. Teresa of Calcutta

**School District if applicable:** Archdiocese of Philadelphia

**County of School:** Montgomery County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Chrissy Corley

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Parent of student

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Mrs. McKiernan is a kindergarten teacher at St. Teresa of Calcutta.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mrs. McKiernan has helped my son to transition into kindergarten. He is a challenging student and she has reached out to help us with this transition.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. McKiernan works closely with the other kindergarten teacher to align their kindergarten curriculum. This helps the students in both classes to recognize they are all on the same page.

- 4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. McKiernan speaks kind and respectfully to her students, even when dealing with difficult situations.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 93**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Max Malossini

**Position:** Math Teacher

**School:** Springfield Township High School

**School District if applicable:** School District of Springfield Township

**County of School:** Montgomery County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Chuck Rittenhouse

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Principal

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Grew up and studied in Italy, achieving a Masters in Mathematics

Earned 30 graduate credits in American schools

Has taught Math in Italy for seven years and America for twenty-six years

Adjunct Professor at Arcadia University and Bryn Mawr College

In South Carolina, nominated for state Teacher of the Year

Coached Academic Team at various schools

Created Exchange Program between STHS and Italian high school with the goal of sharing STEM curriculum

Teacher of AP Calculus for twenty years

AP reader since 2007

Advisor to National Honor Society

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

From 7:00am to late in the afternoon, Mr. Mal's classroom is always full of enthusiastic students who are there to learn Math, socialize with each other and to become young, responsible adults.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Max is a contributing member to his department, the overall school, National Honor Society, the Academic Team, and is a valued and trusted colleague to the high school Principal. When I need guidance, he is the first person I see.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mr. Mal was an easy choice for this award. He is a favorite amongst his students, the staff and the entire Springfield Township community.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 94**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Nicole Brown

**Position:** 2nd Grade Teacher

**School:** Gulph Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Upper Merion Area School District

**County of School:** Montgomery County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Justin Brown

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Nicole is my wife.

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Nicole Brown possesses a strong educational background that underscores her qualifications for the Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union Foundation's Excellence in Teaching Award. With nearly a decade of teaching experience, Nicole has demonstrated her commitment and expertise in the field of education. Her career has spanned various states before she settled in Pennsylvania, allowing her to bring a diverse set of perspectives and teaching approaches to her classroom. This breadth of experience has enriched her ability to connect with students of varying backgrounds and needs, contributing to her effectiveness as an educator.

Nicole's educational foundation is grounded in her degree from West Chester University, which has equipped her with a solid pedagogical framework. Throughout her career, she has continually pursued professional development opportunities and certifications to enhance her teaching skills. Her dedication to staying current with the latest educational methodologies is a testament to her commitment to her students' success. Moreover, Nicole's achievements related to education extend beyond the classroom. Her involvement in diversity, equity, and inclusion training showcases her progressive mindset and advocacy for a more inclusive educational environment.

**2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Nicole Brown has consistently gone above and beyond for her students, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to their well-being and educational growth. One remarkable example of her dedication occurred during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. When schools transitioned to remote learning, Nicole understood the emotional toll it was taking on her students, especially the younger ones. In response, she personally delivered ice treats to each of her students' homes. This gesture symbolized not only her dedication to their academic progress but also her deep concern for their happiness and togetherness during a difficult period. Nicole's willingness to go the extra mile to connect with her students on a personal level exemplifies her exceptional care and commitment as an educator.

Furthermore, Nicole's commitment to diversity and inclusion training extends beyond the classroom. She actively seeks out opportunities to promote tolerance and understanding among her students and the broader community. Her "September Rose Series" of children's books, inspired by her own daughter, is a powerful example of her dedication to teaching valuable life lessons through literature. These books not only educate but also promote the importance of diversity and empathy. Nicole's initiative to create a more inclusive literary landscape showcases her passion for nurturing a generation of open-minded and compassionate individuals. Her ability to transcend the traditional boundaries of teaching by positively impacting her students through innovative means underscores her exceptional dedication to their growth and development.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Nicole Brown has been an exemplary team player and collaborator, consistently working alongside her peers to foster excellence in the classroom environment. One notable example of her collaborative spirit is her adept management of paraprofessionals within her classroom. Nicole doesn't just view her paraprofessionals as assistants but as valued colleagues, recognizing their unique contributions to the learning process. She actively engages with them in planning and implementing effective teaching strategies, creating a cohesive and supportive educational team. This collaboration not only benefits her students but also sets a positive example for her fellow educators, encouraging a culture of teamwork and mutual respect within the school.

Nicole Brown's dedication to her students extends beyond the classroom, as evidenced by a heartwarming story during the COVID-19 pandemic. When schools transitioned to remote learning, Nicole recognized the emotional toll it was taking on her young students, who were confined to their homes. In a remarkable act of kindness and commitment, Nicole decided to personally brighten their days. She loaded her car with Rita's Water Ice, a beloved local treat, and embarked on a special mission. With a smile on her face and a heart full of love for her students, Nicole drove her car, which she humorously referred to as the "Ice Cream Truck," to each of her students' homes. She carefully adhered to safety measures, ensuring a contactless delivery. As she approached each doorstep, she brought not only the sweet and refreshing treats but also a sense of joy, togetherness, and reassurance to her students and their families during a challenging time. This act of going above and beyond the call of duty symbolized Nicole's dedication to her students' happiness and well-being, transcending the traditional boundaries of a teacher-student relationship.

Nicole's personal delivery of Rita's Water Ice was a memorable and heartwarming example of her extraordinary commitment to her students, highlighting her genuine care for their emotional and social needs. This story serves as a testament to her exceptional dedication as an educator, leaving a lasting impact on her students and their families.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Nicole Brown embodies the essence of a true role model for her students in a multitude of ways. One striking aspect of her role model status is her dedication to promoting diversity and inclusion. Nicole actively seeks out opportunities to instill these values in her students, both inside and outside the classroom. One notable instance was when she organized a "Cultural Fair" within her school, encouraging students to embrace and celebrate their diverse backgrounds. Through interactive exhibits, food tastings, and art displays, Nicole fostered an environment where students learned to appreciate and respect one another's cultural heritage. Her unwavering commitment to teaching tolerance and understanding through such initiatives is a shining example for her students, inspiring them to become empathetic and inclusive individuals in society.

Furthermore, Nicole's involvement in the community and her Children's Author endeavors make her a role model who extends her impact beyond the classroom walls.



Her "September Rose Series" of children's books, which promotes important life lessons of tolerance and acceptance, serves as a source of inspiration for her students. They witness firsthand how their teacher's passion and creativity have the power to positively influence the world. Nicole's dedication to making a difference, both as an educator and an author, sets a high standard for her students, motivating them to aspire to greatness and embrace their potential to create positive change in their own lives and communities. Nicole Brown's role model status isn't just about teaching; it's about instilling values and sparking inspiration that will last a lifetime.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 95**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Eileen Koenig

**Position:** Middle School Science Teacher & Science Department Chair

**School:** Ursuline Academy

**School District if applicable:**

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** Middle School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Ann Phillips

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Former colleague

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Teaching is Eileen's second career. She originally started as a Product Safety Advisor and decided to pursue a career in teaching. She has a BS in Environmental Science & a Master's in Environment Education from Drexel University. Eileen has been teaching for 11 years. She has been teaching Middle School Science at Ursuline for the last 7 years. She is also in her 2nd year as Science Department Chair overseeing the Middle School & Upper School science programs. Eileen is a Smithsonian Institute Teacher Ambassador. In the Summer of 2023 she spent 2 weeks representing Ursuline and participating at the Teacher Innovator Institute at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C. Every summer, this program brings together 30 teachers from across the United States who have gone through a rigorous application process to collaborate, learn and grow as STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) teamers.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Eileen is the true example of a lifelong learner! She LOVES Science and it always looking for new innovative ways to teach her students. She consistently participates in webinars

and workshops about various science topics and teaching strategies. She has done extensive training in Project Based Learning (PBL) and has transformed many of her science projects to follow this model. The main philosophy around PBL is that students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects. When we were home and virtual during COVID from March-June 2020, she recorded videos and took on the persona "Eileen the Science Queen" to help her students learn the material while we were separate at home. Click here to check out some of the episodes. She wants to make learning fun and she wants her students to see how what they're learning applies to real life. One of my favorite labs she does is an Indiana Jones lab where she dresses in character and the focus is on density using the concept from the Temple of Doom movie where he tries to take the golden idol and replacing it with a bag of sand.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Eileen is a true team player! She works well with all of her colleagues and is always trying to look for ways to collaborate with other departments (Art, Math, English, etc) on cross curricular projects. Her main goal is to create a safe learning environment where her students are excited to learn about Science!! She works very closely with the MS Counselor to make sure she is doing all she can to help all of her students.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Eileen leads by example. She is a true testament of why you should never stop learning and exploring. She is not afraid to admit when she makes a mistakes and she truly shows her real self to her students. She will dress up on theme days, she goes above and beyond for her class activities and projects, and she is just always thinking of something different to try. She looks for alternative ways to test students besides just your normal pencil and paper test. She meets her students where they are and sparks their curiosity and creativity so they want to keep exploring and learning!

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 96**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Janice Toomey

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** NCCL School

**School District if applicable:** Christina

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Jordan Bailey

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

The NCCL School staff and current parents whole-heartedly nominate Janice Toomey for the Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union Foundation Excellence in Teaching Award. Janice is a State of Delaware certified educator with over 30 years of experience teaching upper elementary school. She first began teaching at NCCL School in 1994, and with the exclusion of a few years living "across the pond," has spent the entirety of her teaching career educating students in grades 2 through 4. Her primary focus in the classroom is writing, reading, and social students, but her reach far extends that. In the mid-nineties, Janice established a drama program at NCCL School, and has put her heart and soul into it every single time. She recognizes that the work is crucial not necessarily to create a Broadway-level production, but because it matters so much to the students; the whole program is about the kids only, and it has helped forge life-long friendships among them and ties them to NCCL for a long time afterward. Those students continue to be part of the NCCL School community because of the impact of the drama program.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Janice is patient with her students not only in the moment, but in the grand scheme. She knows the growth of a child cannot be rushed but must be carefully supported. She waits and watches to attempt to understand and truly see someone before she jumps to decide what a student needs. She is a scientist in a way, but as loving and caring as a treasured member of your family. Even with her substantial experience in psychology and child development, Janice allows herself to view each child as their own unique person, never as a type that comes with specific instructions. Perhaps that is her ultimate goal; to carefully consider each life that comes into her classroom not as a puzzle to solve, but as a piece of a larger puzzle. She makes everyone feel like they do not just fit, but that they are a vital piece of our community and our world.

Anecdotally, once a child came into school with an elaborate and definitely adult-made project. It was a touchy situation because the child clearly didn't do the work and the parents were "helping " with good intentions. Janice, as she always does, put aside any feelings of frustration and put the child's feelings and needs first. She leaned in and said, "Do you feel like this is what you had in mind from the beginning?"

The child shook his head and looked ashamed. "My mom did this mostly. I hate it when she does that."

"So you had a different way? Would you like to try your way here at school?"

The child said, "I want to do all of my work here at school." And he did. And Janice made time for that. And years later, that child has a completely different image of himself than he might have otherwise. He saw his own hands as capable and his own ideas as being worthwhile.

There are hundreds of stories like this, but Janice would never tell them. She thinks it's just part of her job to be completely wise and selfless, and often simply magic.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Janice has been an invaluable asset to the NCCL School community, particularly in her collaborative efforts with her peers. The school has a history of long-tenured staff, and

we have been lucky enough to have had the pleasure of working with Janice for many years. Our art teacher shares a bit about her experience working with Janice: "Although I was not new to teaching when I became the Art teacher at NCCL, I found that working in a progressive school environment was a new experience. Janice provided a teaching compass when I had questions or concerns about my art lessons or our students. She attended the renowned Chicago Institute of Art and has a background in printmaking. She has exchanged many of her view points about art and artists with me over the years, often providing me with new contexts to share with students. I value her perspective on art and it guides my teaching everyday. Over the years we have worked together to build a poetry unit that marries the students' thoughts and feelings with portraiture. She inspires her students to embrace poetry, writing, and art as a way to give them a voice. Her excitement over the creative self expression of each of the students is contagious. Working with her is a joy and reminds me to enjoy each and every interaction with my students."

Janice's collaborative efforts with her peers, as highlighted by the art teacher, demonstrate her commitment to facilitating excellence in the classroom environment. Through mentorship, shared perspectives, and collaborative curriculum development, Janice has left a positive and lasting impact on the school community. Her influence extends beyond the realm of art, as she inspires students to embrace creativity and self-expression through poetry, writing, and self-expression. Her contagious enthusiasm for the creative process contributes to a positive and engaging classroom environment. Janice's collaborative spirit and dedication to interdisciplinary teaching not only benefit her immediate colleagues but also enhance the overall educational experience for students at NCCL School.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

If you are looking for a good teacher, you shouldn't necessarily ask grown-ups or parents, but rather you should study the flow of children on a playground. The real test is to watch where the children go when they feel anxious, when they are bursting with exciting news (which is sometimes about a small bug that flew into their shoulder), or when they just need to feel seen.

At NCCL School, the children (regardless of age or personality) always go to Janice. Some lean on her for comfort because she has always made them feel strong. Others just check in for a moment, because she has always made them feel seen. Most just like to ask about play practice since that is how they still get to connect with their beloved teacher even after they have moved on from her class. When asked why she continues to turn her life upside down twice a year putting on elaborate shows, she says, "It's for the kids who aren't in our class anymore. This way we never lose them."

The magic of Janice lies in her modesty and her patience. She has the most insightful things to say and gives the best advice, but she listens far more than she talks. Everyone feels like Janice hears them, which is an incredible feeling especially for a child.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 97**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Jennifer Vintigni

**Position:** World Language Department Chair; Global Education Coordinator; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Co-Chair

**School:** Padua Academy

**School District if applicable:** Catholic Diocese Wilmington

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Anna Alinda

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co-Worker

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Jennifer Vintigni serves as the Department Chair of Padua Academy's World Language Department. She moved into that position this summer after serving for fourteen years as a Spanish Language educator, with her last six at Padua Academy. Jennifer completed both her Bachelor's in Spanish Education and her Master's in Spanish Literature at the University of Delaware. She currently teaches AP Spanish Language, Honors Spanish 4, Spanish 4, Honors Spanish 3. She is certified with a continuing license in the state of Delaware. Jennifer also serves as Padua's Global Education Coordinator, and as a co-chair of the staff committee to support the school's efforts in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. She is a moderator of the student club La Mezcla.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Jennifer stands out as an educator in how she merges the highest quality instruction with a truly affirming classroom community. When asked to describe what they love about Señora Vintigni, her students first speak about classroom culture. Lexi F., a



current senior, said "Sra. Vintigni not only engages us in learning Spanish, but makes us enjoy learning. I can tell how my Spanish has improved immensely over the past 2 years. Not only does she foster an amazing environment for learning, but her door is always open to make all students feel comfortable and welcome." Allison M., another senior, echoed a similar sentiment. In describing how Jennifer's instructional approach engages students, Allison reflected, "Señora Vintigni is such a dedicated and amazing teacher each day in class. She always has time to listen to our Spanglish stories from the weekend or other fun updates in our lives. Her classroom is always so welcoming and inviting. The most memorable time of her going above and beyond for us was making a scavenger hunt throughout the entire school for us to learn about impactful Hispanic Americans during Hispanic Heritage Month. She put up small posters with information all around for us to find with clues and hints if we got stuck. The best part was that she left the posters up for a few days after, which allowed other students to also learn about these important people, even if they weren't in a Spanish class." As Allison so astutely recognized, Jennifer works to go above and beyond for her own students, as well as the students she doesn't directly teach within the Padua community. In her role as head of the World Language department, Global Education coordinator, and co-chair of Padua's DEI staff committee, she institutes programs that impact the whole student body. She recently served as the sole coordinator for a week-long exchange program with two international partner schools. Without a second thought, Jennifer serves with enthusiasm and joy, consistently delivering the highest quality instruction and transformational educational experiences for her students and for the broader Padua community.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Jennifer is highly attuned to student needs. As part of her role as chairperson of the World Languages Department, Jennifer completes annual observations of her colleagues, with a focus on educators' commitment to Catholic education, classroom environment, and quality instruction. Jennifer sought to broaden the indicators in this evaluation, so that she could provide feedback on the safe environment that her colleagues fostered in their classrooms rather than just focusing on the physical safety in the classroom. The feedback that Jennifer provided teachers was collegial and offered constructive, actionable feedback such that all teachers delivered the mission of Padua Academy and the World Language Department.

Additionally, Jennifer brings a highly collaborative tone to her work alongside peers. In her work on the staff DEI committee and other special projects, Jennifer is quick to ask questions and solicit feedback from colleagues. She does not rush to solutions until she fully understands the place from which her colleagues stand. Jennifer's approach is an excellent case study in collaboration. When paired with her exceptional work ethic, it makes her not only a productive co-worker, but one that uplifts her peers and the work they do.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

First and foremost, Jennifer is a role model in the way she chooses to engage with her students. She creates a safe space, which is especially valuable as students encounter cultures within her curriculum with which they might not have previous experience. As senior Allison recognized, "In addition to fun structured activities and lessons, Sra. Vintigni teaches us how to be role models everyday in our class. We are a smaller group, which allows us to connect more personally. One time, we were discussing our upcoming international travel trip. She told us how she wanted us to be well prepared not only for the travel aspects, but also the differences in cultures. We were focusing on the food, and she was telling us about how foods can seem strange to us but very common in another country. She taught us that it's okay to not want to try a food that we were not fond of, without being rude. She showed us videos and pictures of different foods and that it could be something fun to try, not 'weird' or 'gross.' I feel that these two experiences show that Sra. Vintigni wants us to be good students, but also good people." The way that Jennifer seamlessly weaves together language instruction and cross-cultural education has a significant impact on her students. Jennifer makes an intentional choice seem effortless to her students: she is able to be "real" in appropriate and meaningful ways while constantly pointing them towards educational success, self-improvement, and cultural awareness.

## APPLICATION NUMBER: 98

### NOMINEE INFORMATION

**Name:** John McIntyre

**Position:** Kindergarten Teacher

**School:** North star Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Red Clay Consolidated School District

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### NOMINATED BY

**Your name:** Punit Sinha

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Parent of student

### NOMINATION:

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

I don't have the specifics

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

My kid started in kindergarten this year and we have seen significant improvement in her reading and writing skills, big credit to Mr McIntyre. He is very thorough in his approach and I was impressed learning about his teaching approach.

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

I don't have any specifics

- 4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 99**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kwamsha Evans

**Position:** 5th grade math teacher

**School:** Warner Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Red Clay Consolidated School District

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** KIMBERLY PRICE

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Ms. Evans earned her Bachelor of Arts in Education from Lincoln University and completed her Masters in Educational Leadership at Wilmington University. With a commitment to education spanning over 23 years, she aspires to transition into a leadership role in the future. Throughout her career, Ms. Evans has held various responsibilities, including serving as the summer school coordinator and currently holding the position of lead science teacher. Additionally, she takes the helm of our mentoring program, fostering connections between students and positive role models.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Ms. Evans is a devoted educator who demonstrates genuine concern for her students, addressing not only their academic progress but also attending to their social, emotional, and mental well-being. She invests time in establishing positive teacher-student relationships, meeting each student at their individual academic level. Recognizing the unique needs of her students, she takes a personal interest in them, planning extracurricular activities that connect with real-life experiences beyond the

standard curriculum. Ms. Evans goes beyond the classroom to equip her students with essential life skills for the present and future.

Her understanding nature extends to the social, emotional, and mental health aspects of her students. She conscientiously implements plans to accommodate these needs, ensuring a supportive environment. As a caring and nurturing teacher, Ms. Evans is committed to nothing but the best for her students, fostering an atmosphere where they can thrive academically and personally.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Evans, a dedicated educator, actively collaborates with her peers to cultivate an environment of excellence in the classroom. One noteworthy example of her collaborative efforts is a cross-disciplinary project aimed at demonstrating the real-world applications of academic concepts. By partnering with teachers from various subjects, she contributed to a holistic learning experience that transcended traditional academic boundaries.

During team meetings, Ms. Evans engages in open discussions about student progress and shares valuable insights into effective teaching strategies. She collaborates with her colleagues to pinpoint areas of improvement and implements targeted interventions. Recognizing the significance of social and emotional learning, she worked collaboratively with the school counselor and other teachers to seamlessly integrate mindfulness activities into the daily routine, fostering a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere.

Ms. Evans actively participates in professional development initiatives alongside her colleagues, attending workshops and sharing newfound knowledge with the team. This collaborative approach not only enhances her own teaching skills but also contributes to a collective effort to elevate the overall quality of education provided to students.

Furthermore, Ms. Evans serves as a mentor for newer teachers, offering guidance and support based on her wealth of experience. By sharing successful strategies and providing constructive feedback, she actively contributes to the professional growth of her colleagues, fostering a culture of collaboration within the school.

In summary, Ms. Evans is a collaborative force in the educational landscape. Her involvement in cross-disciplinary projects, active participation in team meetings,

engagement in professional development, and mentorship of newer teachers exemplify her commitment to excellence. Through her collaborative efforts, Ms. Evans positively impacts the broader educational environment, creating a culture of shared learning and continuous improvement within the school community.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Evans serves as an exemplary role model for her students through her unwavering dedication to their holistic development. One prominent example is her involvement in a cross-disciplinary project aimed at illustrating the real-world applications of academic concepts. By engaging in collaborative efforts with teachers from diverse subjects, she demonstrates to students the value of interdisciplinary cooperation and the practical relevance of their education.

In the classroom, Ms. Evans sets a positive tone by fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. Through mindfulness activities integrated into the daily routine, she teaches students the importance of emotional well-being and resilience. By modeling a balanced and mindful approach to challenges, she encourages students to develop their own coping strategies and emotional intelligence.

Ms. Evans actively participates in professional development initiatives, showcasing to her students the importance of lifelong learning. By attending workshops and sharing her newfound knowledge with enthusiasm, she instills in her students a sense of curiosity and a commitment to continuous improvement.

As a mentor to newer teachers, Ms. Evans exemplifies leadership and empathy. Her willingness to share successful strategies and provide constructive feedback demonstrates the importance of collaboration and mentorship. Students witness firsthand the positive impact of supporting and uplifting others, fostering a culture of camaraderie within the school community.

Beyond academics, Ms. Evans is known for her genuine care for each student. She takes the time to understand their individual needs and plans extracurricular activities that relate to real-life experiences. By doing so, she communicates to her students the importance of empathy and adaptability in navigating the complexities of life.

In essence, Ms. Evans serves as a role model by embodying the values of collaboration, resilience, continuous learning, empathy, and care. Through her actions and interactions, she inspires her students to embrace these qualities and strive for excellence in all aspects of their lives.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 100**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Kylee Holliday

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** Al du Pont High School

**School District if applicable:** Red Clay Consolidated School District

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Holly Golder

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Supervisor

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Educational Background: 15th year teaching (all in Red Clay), 7 years at the middle school level, 8 at the high school level all 15 in social studies  
Certifications: Social Studies 6-12, ELA 6-8, Spec. Ed  
Achievements: Bonnie Meszaros Econ. Educator of the Year Award (2022), Cohen Jordan Secondary Award- MSCSS (2022), building teacher of the year (2022)

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mrs. Holliday stands out as an exemplary educator who goes above and beyond for her students. One remarkable initiative that showcases their dedication is the creation of interactive life simulations through the Reality Fair financial literacy day. This innovative approach and partnership with FMCU, goes beyond traditional classroom methods, providing students with a hands-on experience that transcends theoretical knowledge. The Reality Fair is a transformative event that immerses students in a simulated real-world scenario where they make financial decisions and navigate the complexities of personal finance. Mrs. Holliday understands that financial literacy is a crucial skill for



students' future success and has ingeniously integrated this practical learning opportunity into the curriculum. The simulations cover various aspects of financial management, including budgeting, saving, investing, and dealing with unexpected expenses. By participating in these interactive activities, students not only gain a deeper understanding of financial concepts but also develop practical skills that will serve them well in adulthood.

Her commitment to their students is evident in the careful planning and execution of the Reality Fair. To gain student buy-in she has incentives for students who complete their budget sheet and invite all seniors to participate, even if they do not have her in class. The simulations are designed to be both educational and engaging, encouraging active participation and critical thinking. The immersive nature of the experience ensures that students not only grasp the theoretical aspects of financial literacy but also learn how to apply this knowledge in real-life situations. Mrs. Holliday goes the extra mile to create a supportive and encouraging learning environment, fostering a sense of responsibility and empowerment among her students. The impact of the Reality Fair extends beyond the classroom, as students carry the valuable lessons learned into their personal lives and future endeavors. Her dedication to enhancing the educational experience through innovative methods sets a commendable example for educators everywhere, emphasizing the importance of practical, experiential learning in preparing students for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Holliday has been a catalyst for excellence in the classroom environment through her collaborative efforts with peers, particularly in the realm of financial literacy and economics. Recognizing the importance of financial education, She took the initiative to introduce a full-year financial literacy course at AIHS, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of personal finance. This social studies elective has become a cornerstone in equipping students with essential life skills. Additionally, Mrs. Holliday played a pivotal role in organizing the Reality Fair, an interactive event that immerses students in real-world financial scenarios. She has shared her success with teachers across the country at UD's Economics Education Conference.

To further enhance financial literacy education, Mrs. Holliday extended her impact to the 9th-grade economics curriculum. She created a dedicated financial literacy mini-unit, seamlessly integrating practical financial concepts into the broader economic

framework. This initiative not only enriched the curriculum but also demonstrated Mrs. Holliday's commitment to holistic education.

Mrs. Holliday's dedication transcends the classroom, as evidenced by her advocacy efforts. She has actively participated in a Senate education committee hearing in Dover, championing the cause of making financial literacy mandatory in Delaware. This advocacy work underscores her commitment to systemic change and ensuring that all students have access to essential financial education.

In a collaborative spirit, Mrs. Holliday facilitated professional development at the University of Delaware Econ. Ed. Conference in July 2023. By sharing her expertise on hosting a Reality Fair, Kylee empowered fellow educators to implement similar impactful initiatives in their own classrooms. This collaborative approach not only fosters a culture of excellence among peers but also amplifies the reach and influence of innovative teaching practices.

In summary, Mrs. Holliday's collaborative efforts, from introducing a full-year financial literacy course to advocating for policy change, showcase a commitment to excellence in financial education. Her initiatives not only benefit students directly but also contribute to a broader movement for improved financial literacy education across the educational landscape.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Holliday stands as a beacon of inspiration and mentorship, exemplifying the qualities of an exceptional teacher and role model to her students. Beyond the confines of her classroom, she assumes a leadership role as Al du Pont's department chair and social studies curriculum council representative. In these capacities, Mrs. Holliday not only guides her colleagues but also plays a pivotal role in shaping the overall educational experience at the school.

As a leader, Mrs. Holliday extends her influence beyond the classroom walls, demonstrating her commitment to positive change. Her proactive approach is evident in her advocacy efforts at the state level, where she champions the requirement for all students to take a financial literacy course. Recognizing the importance of financial education, Mrs. Holliday seeks to institute lasting change that will benefit students statewide. Her dedication to this cause underscores her role as a visionary educator

who envisions a broader impact for her students beyond the immediate classroom setting.

Amidst the challenges of a transitioning school environment and declining enrollment over the past five years, Mrs. Holliday remains a steadfast source of support for her students. Her unwavering commitment to their well-being and academic success transcends the fluctuations the school has experienced. By staying with the school during this period of change, Mrs. Holliday exemplifies resilience, demonstrating to her students the value of commitment, perseverance, and loyalty.

Mrs. Holliday's role as a teacher and leader extends far beyond the delivery of content; she shapes the educational landscape through her leadership roles, advocates for positive change on a broader scale, and provides steadfast support to her students during times of transition. In embodying these qualities, Mrs. Holliday leaves an indelible mark on her students, inspiring them not only academically but also as responsible, resilient individuals prepared to navigate the challenges of life beyond the classroom.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 101**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Lauren Williams

**Position:** 5th Grade Teacher

**School:** Forest Oak Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Red Clay Consolidated School District

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Beth Wagner

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co-Worker

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Lauren is a 5th grade ELA and Social Studies teacher. She plans rigorous lessons that align to the Common Core State Standards. In her 4 years of teaching, she's packed a lot into her classroom. She has excellent classroom management, captures the ideas of all students in engaging lessons allowing for all students to demonstrate learning, and collaborates with fellow teachers. She has planned field trips to allow for community engagement. And, as team leader, she demonstrates leadership and task management.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

K

- 3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Lauren always goes above and beyond for their students. She constantly reaches out for additional supports and resources for them such as gathering clothes for students who have none, providing hair cleaning for a student with matted hair, and going across

district lines to get a student's history to ensure that they are supported even though they left our building.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Lauren is definitely a role model. She is empathetic and shows students that it's okay to be vulnerable. She connects with them on a deep level. For example, last year she had a student that had a hard time staying in the classroom. Lauren would sit in the hallway with him as he calmed down. On the floor. Hugging him to meet his sensory needs. She goes above and beyond like that weekly.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 102**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Lindsay Wolfe

**Position:** Grade 4 teacher

**School:** Linden Hill Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Red Clay Consolidated School District

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Stephanie Fleetwood

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Ms. Lindsay Wolfe is in her third year teaching fourth grade at Linden Hill Elementary School in the Red Clay Consolidated School District in Wilmington, Delaware. Ms. Wolfe graduated from the University of Delaware in 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and a concentration in Special Education. She received her Master's in Special Education in 2022 from Wilmington University. She is enrolled at the American College of Education and will receive a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction in 2024.

During Ms. Wolfe's first two years of teaching, she was nominated for Teacher of the Year at Linden Hill Elementary. This is quite an honor as a novice teacher, but it speaks volumes about Ms. Wolfe and her impact on the students and families she works with daily.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Ms. Wolfe goes above and beyond her call of duty to ensure that her students receive the best possible education. Recognizing the importance of well-designed and engaging

lessons, she willingly sacrificed her lunch and recess periods every day to collaborate with me in my role as an instructional math coach during her first year of teaching. Ms. Wolfe understood that effective planning was the key to fostering a positive learning environment and inspiring her students to think like mathematicians. Despite the demands of a novice teacher, she embraces the opportunity to improve her teaching strategies and incorporate innovative approaches into her lessons. When you walk into her classroom it is evident the students are taking ownership of their learning and developing conceptual understanding of concepts such as fractions and multi-digit multiplication and division through the use of active engagement strategies. Students are up and moving around, math conversations are happening between students, and students support each other with positive comments such as "I know you can do this." Ms. Wolfe has created a community of learners where showing respect is the expectation.

While academics are an important part of a student's day, Ms. Wolfe builds relationships with her students and gets to know them on a personal level. Her students recognize that she truly cares about them and it is evident in the way she interacts with them positively and calmly. This allows the students to take risks and make mistakes in the classroom. The other day Ms. Wolfe was sharing a video with me of a student in her class who was struggling with long division. She had created a color-coded work mat for this student to help him with the steps for division. This is just what Ms. Wolfe does. She meets the needs of her students whether it's something one student needs or the whole class. Outside of the classroom, Ms. Wolfe supports her students and their families by attending their sporting events, reaching out to families regularly, and making it a point to learn about student's likes and dislikes.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Wolfe's commitment to her students' success and her collaborative spirit elevate the quality of her math lessons and set a shining example of dedication and teamwork within the school community. For the past two years, Ms. Wolfe has been the building math lead at Linden Hill. In this role, she is responsible for promoting fidelity to the district-adopted math curricular resources, pacing guides, and assessment guides while modeling best instructional practices. Ms. Wolfe plans and presents at faculty meetings and manages the math materials to make sure the teachers have the materials they need to be successful in the classroom. Also, as the math lead, she is responsible for assisting her peers with learning to analyze data and differentiate instruction for

maximum student growth. Ms. Wolfe also assists in organizing and implementing MTSS for Mathematics. This means she creates data-based intervention groups for teachers across the school so that students get the interventions they need to support their learning. During the summer Ms. Wolfe continues to work alongside colleagues from the district by participating in summer curriculum writing in the content areas of math and science.

While making sure her colleagues feel supported in the classroom, she also believes that the morale of the teachers is a key component in making sure teachers feel valued and respected. Ms. Wolfe serves as the Sunshine Committee chairperson. The Sunshine Committee is responsible for planning events both in and out of school to help boost morale and show appreciation for the hard work that everyone puts into their jobs.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Ms. Wolfe effortlessly assumes the role of a true role model for her students. Beyond imparting academic knowledge, she exemplifies integrity, compassion, and resilience that extend far beyond the classroom. She recognizes each student's worth and gives them the confidence to see it in themselves. Ms. Wolfe's genuine concern for each student's well-being fosters a learning environment where students feel safe and important.



**APPLICATION NUMBER: 103**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Melissa Johnson

**Position:** Digital Communications CTE Instructor

**School:** Alexis I duPont High School

**School District if applicable:** Red Clay Consolidated School District

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Patricia Szaroleta

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Melissa's educational background includes a BFA in Fine Art Photography and a Masters in Art Education. She has been teaching Fine Art, Graphic Design and Digital Media for 15 years in Colonial and Red Clay School Districts. She currently holds a teaching certificate in K-12 Art & K-12 Career and Tech Education. She was a Building Level Teacher of the Year for the Wallin School in 2017, and has displayed her own and student artwork around the State.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Melissa has worked with students from Kindergarten to High School. She has also worked in various special programs including with Intensive learning students and adult integration. In trying to prepare students for jobs and careers Mrs. Johnson has assisted students in creating resumes and applying for jobs. Including writing references and calling businesses for students. One of her favorite stories is "4 years after her student graduated, she ran into him at a store. He hugged her and said, " I get now." She looked

at him confused. He said "I know why you were so hard on me. I get it now. You wanted me learn it and be prepared. Thank you." She will never forget that.

This is one of the multitude of examples that I can share on behalf of Mrs. Johnson. When she is not running around purchasing items for the school store, printing t-shirts or celebrating students, Mrs. Johnson is most likely helping a colleague. Melissa is an integral part of the Tier 1 systems of support at AIHS and volunteers after school with our Theatre department helping to constructing backdrops and costumes utilizing her artistic talent. Melissa's classes are packed by demand which is a true testament to her passing for students and learning.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Melissa is currently the coordinator for Yearbook and the School Store at AIHS. She also helps and supports various school programs like Esports, MTSS, and student leadership. Melissa strives to make her classroom an inclusive welcoming space that not only educates her students about Digital media and Design while making connections to real world careers, but also a classroom that facilitates relationships and conversations with her students about their lives and the world around them.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

In Melissa's case the data speaks for itself. Melissa year after year has a long list of students who not only request to take her classes but ALSO request to spend additional time as her teachers assistant, fully aware that some days they will be together for over 3 hours. Students will say that these are the best and brightest parts of thier day. "Why" one may ask? The answer is so very simple. Becuase Melissa cares. Melissa cares about each and every students in her clsasroom. She develops meaningful relationships and thier families. Melissa is a mother of two and helps to model a postive and healthy work-life balance for her students. Melissa is always kind, respectful and displays a positive attitude. Even when holding students accountable, Melissa explains the "why" and the future consewquences of thier actions. Melissa Johnson helps prepare studens for the very challenging next steps in thier educational career and life journey. We are so fortunate to have her as a member of the AIHS community.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 104**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Robin Thompson

**Position:** 4th grade teacher

**School:** Forest Oak Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Red Clay Consolidated School District

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Angela Diianno

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Robin Thompson is an exceptional teacher who has been teaching for about 30 years (she hasn't completely disclosed the exact amount of time to me). In the time I have known Ms. Thompson, she has taught 4th grade, and she also teaches additional students in the evening (students who are being homeschooled or tutored). Robin is the science lead at Forest Oak, she participates in most school sponsored activities, she is the first in line to volunteer to help, and she was our Teacher of the Year in 2022.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Robin's number one priority is her teacher-student relationship. She also makes it a point to develop personal relationships with her students' caregivers. Robin often keeps in touch with families as well. A few years ago, Robin lost a student in her class. A memorial was made for this child at Forest Oak. Each year, Robin plants flowers with her current class and explains to them what the memorial is. She then sends a picture to the child's family so that they know that their son will always be remembered. Ms. Thompson is also known for having parents come into her classroom when positive

things are happening, or sadly negative things. She had a student having a difficult time in class, and Robin did not hesitate to have the father sit in class to witness and offer support for the student. When the student witnessed the teacher and father collaborating, his behavior improved dramatically. This student is now finding success within the classroom! Lastly, Ms. Thompson is always seen at student events. You can find her as a buddy at Girls on the Run, sitting at the breakfast with santa, picking up an old student for lunch, attending a band concert, dropping extra work off to a student who needs help, and meeting with a parent outside of school. The relationships she makes with families is above and beyond any expectation for a teacher!

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

There is never any doubt that Robin Thompson is/was a team player. When I worked alongside her in the 4th grade, I was a teacher who was transitioning back into the workforce. Robin checked on me every day. She made sure I understood the curriculum, and the expectations, and that I was prepared. She often made copies of her classwork to share with my class. She included my class in activities that she prepared. Her constant emails and texts to make sure I was "in the know" always helped me feel confident and successful. Robin also is an amazing advocate for her team and her students. She will stand up for her beliefs and justify to anyone why something was being done. She supports her team and her students wholeheartedly. In our curriculum, the students were introduced to smudging. Ms. Thompson created a whole experience for the students on our entire team. She dressed in appropriate clothing and modeled the entire ritual for her colleagues and students to witness. It was common practice for Robin to go above and beyond.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Robin Thompson practices what she preaches and teaches. Her bottom line- be a good human. She starts each day with a smile and starts fresh with each child. She is real in her stories and she is upfront with her students. Robin connects with children, and they offer her more respect than I have ever witnessed with a student and teacher. She commands attention and will also dance and be wild in the middle of the classroom. She teaches children to embrace their uniqueness and bring their own qualities to the

classroom. I have witnessed children sharing stories with her and she shows kindness, empathy, and teaches them the power of truly listening.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 105**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Sarah Oberle

**Position:** teacher 1st grade

**School:** North Star Elementary School

**School District if applicable:** Red Clay Consolidated School District

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Keri Warren

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** parent, colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Sarah has been teaching for the last 26 years. She is a first grade teacher at North Star Elementary School. Currently, Sarah is working towards her doctorate in teaching. She has won the teacher of the year award and has been nominated almost every year by her students and their parents.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

My daughter was struggling during her first year of kindergarten. In November, it was recognized that she only knew 3 sight words. She was tested, but didn't qualify for special education or services. Throughout the summer, I worked with her to try and get her caught up for first grade. Hannah was so lucky to end up getting Mrs. Oberle for her first grade teacher. During the first month of her first year, Sarah worked closely with Hannah and noted that Hannah's struggles were continuing despite all of the work she put in over the summer. Mrs. Oberle expressed her concerns and Hannah was able to be retested due to areas of testing that had not been completed. Mrs. Oberle found the missed parts and we did find out that Hannah did qualify for special education for OHI

and processing delays. Currently, Hannah is in 4th grade. She recently was retested and it was found that Hannah does not meet special education requirements. I believe Hannah's success is due to Mrs. Oberle's early intervention, her focus on figuring out what needed to be done next, and how much she cares for her students. Last year, I became the school nurse for North Star and I work across the hall from her classroom. I watch daily as she guides her first graders throughout their school day. I see the love and dedication she has for each student. She is determined to make each child feel special and continues to monitor each student to make sure they have successes in school. I feel lucky to have had her for my daughter, and thankful for all of Hannah's success because of Mrs. Oberle. North Star is a better place because she teaches here.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Oberle has been a team leader for the first grade for many years. She is an excellent resource for the other teachers. The longevity of the first year team is partly due to having such a resource as they have with Mrs. Oberle.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

My daughter has discussed being a teacher as a possibility for a career. She said Mrs. Oberle helped her so much. She also has always talked about how kind Mrs. Oberle was to her. How she could talk to her and looked up to her. Teaching is a challenging career. I feel Hannah would be a great teacher because like her teacher she focuses on people around her and is very giving. Hannah would rather help someone else and make someone feel good, rather than see someone feel sad or feel lost. I think the example her teacher provided, has helped her become a well rounded individual. Mrs. Oberle is that person, she is that teacher, and she that friend that her students need.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 106**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Emily Carmichael

**Position:** Teacher

**School:** North Star Elementary

**School District if applicable:** Red Clay Consolidated School District

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Rachel Costa

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Parent of student

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

This is our first time having a child with Mrs. Carmichael as their teacher. She teaches 4th grade.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Mrs. Carmichael called me before the school year even started to ask what she can do to help my son, Joey feel comfortable at school. Joey has Tourette Syndrome and she took the time to learn more about how it affects him so that she could understand how hard things can be for him at times. I let her know that drawing is a great outlet for him and she has made sure Joey has plenty of time for drawing when he gets done classwork. Mrs. Carmichael also learned that Joey has braces and invisalign and when she had popcorn for the class for a special movie day, he was upset because he cannot eat that with his braces. She went to the faculty lounge and brought him back a special treat! He went from feeling left out to feeling on top of the world thanks to her going above and beyond.



**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Carmichael is working with the other 4th grade teachers to put together a Living Hero Museum Day. They are coordinating days and times when each classroom will dress up as heroes and perform for their classmates and families. Mrs. Carmichael is giving the kids great freedoms with their choices and encouraging them to think outside the box. I also know the classroom fish are from a grant that Mrs. Carmichael and another 4th grade teacher have found. The kids love their fish!

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Mrs. Carmichael is a wonderful role model because she shows that kindness is a natural part of her day. My son was on crutches for toe surgery and was nervous to buy lunch because he did not know how he would carry his tray. He really wanted to buy that day because it was french toast sticks day. Mrs. Carmichael said that she would wait in line with him and carry his tray. When he got his lunch, he noticed it only came with 2 french toast sticks. He asked if he could have more. The lunch lady said he would have to pay for a second lunch if he wanted more. Sadly, he said no thanks. Mrs. Carmichael stepped in and said she would like a french toast sticks lunch also and she then gave her lunch to Joey so he could have the extra french toast sticks!!! He came home from school that day and told us the story of his teacher giving him her lunch at least 3 times!!! It meant so much to him that she did that. Her act of kindness will stick with him always and he will remember that feeling and pay it forward. Mrs. Carmichael is a great example of not only how a teacher should be, but of how a person should be.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 107**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Marie Cowgill

**Position:** Multilingual Specialist

**School:** Newark Charter School

**School District if applicable:**

**County of School:** New Castle County

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Jessica Weller

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Marie has been an elementary school teacher for the past 25 years and holds a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Virginia. She is a certified Teacher of English Learners, Teacher of Students with Special Needs and a Reading Specialist. For the past 6 years, she has worked with Multilingual Learners as a Reading Specialist for students in kindergarten at Newark Charter School. Our K-12 school has over 3,000 students, 250 students in kindergarten alone and Marie is responsible for acclimating students into our school, collecting home language information, assessing their needs and delivering research based strategies to help them meet their learning goals. Last year, after just one year working with Mrs. Cowgill, 21 students out of 29 met the growth requirements of the Federal Government to exit the Multilingual Program completely. All 29 students showed adequate growth in all areas of language development. She is an amazing asset to her students and our school community!

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Marie works tirelessly with her students to help them meet learning goals. She inspires them to be better and to work hard. She provides multimodal lessons and seeks out strategies to help each child grow. Marie differentiates her lessons to ensure that each child is working in their zone of development where the productive struggle can occur. They work, erase, revise and find the process of mistakes as an important part of learning. She has a personal connection with each child and their families. Marie helps to make sure that each child's needs are met, so they can absorb the day-to-day lessons. This can include giving a child snacks, help with getting a uniform, crayons or even books for home.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

In addition to her teacher role, Marie is the Coordinator of the Multilingual Learner Program, instructional leader and mentor. Marie models dynamic lessons and works alongside teachers to help them learn new strategies to utilize in the classroom. She leads the Multilingual Learner Council and provides professional development to her teaching staff to help them meet the language needs of all learners. This year, she wrote a grant to gain funding to create additional training opportunities for her teaching staff. In addition, Marie is organizing a Partner's in Learning Event, where families can come to school to learn strategies to help work with their child at home.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Marie holds herself to high standards to model appropriate behavior and always follows through on her actions. She is a role model in her daily life by utilizing tools to stay organized, using language to show that you can disagree peacefully using your voice to create change. She is a lifelong learner and shares her love of learning with her students. Marie lives for the "aha" moments and uses each student's curiosity to drive their learning. One time, a student was wondering about a rainbow and she used this wonder to drive a lesson where the students made container rainbows and used science terms to meet growth goals in speaking, listening and then extended the lesson to a sequencing activity where the students wrote about their experiment. She celebrates alongside her students and raises the bar for all students to reach for them.

**APPLICATION NUMBER: 108**

**NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Alex Saddic

**Position:** teacher

**School:** Furness High School

**School District if applicable:** School District of Philadelphia

**County of School:** Philadelphia County

**Grade Level:** High School

**NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Rachel Cammisa

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** colleague

**NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Alex has been teaching for 38 years. For the first 10 years, he taught in catholic elementary school and then moved into the School District of Philadelphia, where he taught at George Washington High School and William Penn High School before coming to Furness High School. He teaches world and american history to ESL students. He usually has 9th grade students, but the grade can vary based on the needs of the students. Alex attended Pierce Junior College, West Chester University and Temple University. His teacher certification is in social studies.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Alex is wonderful at making connections with his students. He primarily teaches our students for whom English is a Second Language (ESL). These students are new to the country and need a lot of language support. Alex manages to teach his students history in a way that then enhances their understanding of English. Alex breaks down complicated topics into manageable chunks to make the learning more accessible for his students. He is a very physical teacher, he moves around the room with large gestures

to get the students attention and they are captivated by him. They do not even realize how much they are learning because they are having so much fun. They are able to create these beautiful posters to show where they are making connections and Alex has them displayed throughout the hallways. With Alex as their teacher, these students feel proud of their work and education. Students blossom under his guidance.

Additionally, Alex is co-sponsor of the senior class with me. His enthusiasm for planning events and motivating students is unmatched. He spends countless hours planning and helping to make their senior year a memorable experience. He is able to get the most surly senior to smile and get them jazzed for joining in the school activities for their senior year. He has been the Master of Ceremonies for countless events at Furness. The students love interacting with him.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Alex is a gem of a colleague. He is the teacher you want in your corner as a teacher in any stage of your teaching career. He is gentle and encouraging to new teachers and gives a jolt of joy to seasoned teachers who are feeling jaded. Alex is a thoughtful listener and always has ideas for other teachers to use when they are having a difficult moment in their classroom. I have often come to Alex when I was unsure about how to handle a situation in my classroom and he always listens without judgment. I always feel better having talked to him. His plethora of experience lends to him being an excellent sounding board. He is also a constant reminder of how to bring joy into our teaching. Alex is the driving force behind faculty get-togethers and recognizing teachers when they retire. He is the sunshine in our building, someone you can always count on.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Alex is the consummate professional. He is always prepared for his students and follows through on all expectations. Each student is treated with respect and as an individual. They see him as the adult they would want to be. He meets his students where they are and treats them with respect. He remembers details about his students. I have witnessed him calling out to students he hasn't taught in years and remembering details about them. His students know that they matter and this is someone that they would like to emulate.

## **APPLICATION NUMBER: 109**

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION**

**Name:** Tracy Diviny

**Position:** English Teach and English Department Head

**School:** Franklin Towne Charter High School

**School District if applicable:** School District of Philadelphia

**County of School:** Philadelphia County

**Grade Level:** High School

### **NOMINATED BY**

**Your name:** Christina Ross

**Your relationship to the Nominee:** Co-Teacher

### **NOMINATION:**

- 1. Please provide information regarding this teacher's educational background. Include any of the following information: number of years teaching, grade level, subject, certifications received, and/or achievements related to education.**

Tracy Diviny is a key piece that makes up the heart of Franklin Towne Charter High School (FTCHS) which is located in Philadelphia, PA. Tracy has dedicated her entire professional career to FTCHS. She began as a student teacher and has been a full-time English teacher for nearly twenty years. Tracy has taught a variety of English courses over the years. Tracy is currently a track 3 English 10 Literature teacher. Tracy is responsible to teach sophomores at FT who are struggling readers and have severe literacy deficits. Nearly all of Tracy's students are not reading on grade level and many also an individualized education plans which require specially designed instruction.

- 2. Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students**

Tracy is effective at welcoming and educating all Franklin Towne students that walk into her classroom. Tracy does not lower her expectations rather; she balances her instruction to meet her students' needs. She is the mastermind behind countless engaging activities and challenging assessments. Tracy constantly creates invigorating lessons based on various texts. Recently, Tracy built a nonfiction unit that exposed her

students to various real-world reading topics such as; the electoral college, recipes, and autobiography excerpts. Tracy is known to create unique project-based assessments (PBAs) that allow her students to shine. Some of her PBAs relate to the creation of fictional character's cell phones, collaborating with other students to write narratives, and task analysis writing pieces. Many of Tracy's students are able to pass the daunting Keystone Literature exam due to all of her hard work. Tracy's students become more confident readers and mature 10th grade students by the end of each school year. It is an amazing journey to watch unfold each year.

**3. Tell us how this teacher has worked alongside his or her peers to facilitate excellence in the classroom environment. Include specific examples or stories.**

Since 2018, I have had the pleasure to work alongside Tracy as her Special Education English Instructional Support teacher. Tracy and I have built a lasting relationship over the years. I support the special education students in her English 10 classroom. Together, we collaborate on a daily basis about our students who have severe literacy deficits.

Not only does Tracy effectively educate some of the most challenging students in the building, Tracy is a part of the professional development team and an English Department Head. Many colleagues and I refer to her as our "fearless leader" who will often surprise her English Department teacher with donuts or little gifts. Tracy genuinely cares about the well-being and successes of not only her students, but every staff member in the building. Throughout the school year, Tracy takes charge and presents professional development for fellow faculty members. Lately, she has educated the faculty about best practices when it comes to instruction and assessments. Her professional development presentations are a valuable gift to her fellow teachers. In summary, Tracy is an educator who I strive to emulate. She has been patient and taught me so much over the years. Tracy has inspired me professionally to improve my instructional literacy abilities by going back to school for a Reading Specialist Certificate. This new certification was not something I considered obtaining, until I began working with Tracy and saw her passion for supporting struggling readers and writers. On a personal note, Tracy and I are both wives and mothers to three children. Tracy is someone who I can bounce professional and personal ideas off of. She inspires me to keep working hard professionally, while raising strong and independent children of our own. Tracy never ceases to amaze me with how thoughtful she is to her students, fellow coworkers, and myself. Tracy deserves to be recognized for her constant giving heart and how she is a cornerstone of what educators should strive to be like.

**4. How is this teacher a role model to his or her students? Include specific examples or stories.**

Tracy is a role model to many of her current and previous students. Students learn the value of hard work in her classroom and rise to meet her expectations. This leads to many students looking up to her. She treats her students with respect and has a sense of humor. Many students will stop by her office to say hi before, during, or afterschool. Some have questions other just like the comfort of other welcoming office and abundant candy bowl. Lastly, students keep in touch with Tracy even when she is not longer their classroom teacher. For example, former students will visit the school just to see Tracy and share their successes. Tracy has been a positive role model to countless students over the years.