

APPLICATION NUMBER: 1

Application 1 of 2 for Patrick Ricci

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Patrick Ricci

Position: 5th grade math science and s.s

School: Hillendale elementary

School District if applicable: Unionville chadds ford

County of School: Chester County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Francis Bailey

Your relationship to the Nominee: My 5th grade 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.**

He has been a 5th grade teacher for over 20 yrs

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

He help me in math when i was struggling and went above and beyond to give the class and unforgettable 5th grade 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.**

He runs the oldies lip sync for the students working with his peers to organize it.

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

He would tell us stories about his life teaching us valuable lessons

APPLICATION NUMBER: 2

Application 2 of 2 for Patrick Ricci

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Patrick Ricci

Position: 5th grade teacher

School: Hillendale Elementary

School District if applicable: Unionville Chadds Ford

County of School: Chester County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Tessa Bailey

Your relationship to the Nominee: Former coworker and parent of former 5th grade 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. Ricci has been a devoted 5th grade teacher at Hillendale for almost 30 years.

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

Mr. Ricci goes above and beyond when teaching his 5th graders. He teaches them how to be kind and thoughtful learners. He is known for creating fun challenges in his class, coordinating a district wide oldies dance/lip sync competition. His room is decorated with endless amounts of student drawings and appreciation notes from all his years of teaching. At the end of the year he awards students with a personalized poem describing their strengths and character as a student. He also mails his former 5th grade students a letter once they start high school, the letter has memories from their time in elementary school and encouraging words for their new journey in high school. He truly cares for each student and inspires them to do their best throughout their entire school career.

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 began working with Mr. Ricci last year as I began working in the school district. He was always willing to offer me advice and tips on various curriculum and lessons. If I ever felt like I need more information on a specific lesson, he was eager to share teaching manuals and notes. As a new employee to the public school system, I was extremely thankful for his guidance. When I decided to go for my emergency teaching license to become a substitute teacher, he happily offered to be a personal reference.

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

Every student I've ever known that was a pupil of Mr. Ricci, all express the same sentiment that he was the best teacher ever. He makes every effort to keep in contact with past students, even if it's just a check in on how life is going. He has several past students who he inspired to become teachers later in life. It is without a doubt that any student in his class will forever remember their 5th grade experience.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 3

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Kristy Foley

Position: Second Grade Teacher

School: Bywood

School District if applicable: Upper Darby School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Kristin Meehan

Your relationship to the Nominee: Boss

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. Foley has been a dedicated Second Grade teacher at Bywood Elementary since 2005. As a mother of four, she brings a nurturing and compassionate approach to her classroom, treating every student as if they were her own. Ms. Foley is an exemplary educator and a valued mentor to her colleagues. She approaches every situation with professionalism while remaining calm, patient, and composed in all that she does.

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

Last year, Ms. Foley had a second grader who struggled with behavior, and as we know, behavior is often a form of communication. Later in the year, I learned that Ms. Foley had been quietly packing a snack every single day for this student because he never brought one from home. This simple yet powerful act of kindness is just one example of how she goes above and beyond for her students. Ms. Foley has also spent her own money on clothing and other essentials for students who needed extra support. She is the type of teacher who never seeks recognition for her efforts because, to her, this is simply what dedicated teachers do for their kids.

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. Foley has always been a mentor to her colleagues, especially to newer teachers, because of her compassion, patience, and strong listening skills. She is the person everyone knows they can turn to for support whether it's professional guidance or life advice. Her younger grade-level partners often seek her out for both, and she willingly gives her time and wisdom to help them grow. Ms. Foley leads by quiet example. She stays focused on what truly matters: the students. She never engages in negativity or drama, modeling professionalism and integrity for others to follow. Over the past six years as principal, I've had numerous teachers tell me that if it weren't for Ms. Foley's mentorship, they wouldn't have made it through their first year of teaching. Ms. Foley's classroom is often being chosen for other staff to visit during a peer walk to help as well. It's difficult to pinpoint just one example of her support because she is constantly doing for others—often without anyone even realizing it.

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

Ms. Foley is a true role model for her students in every sense of the word. She leads with understanding, compassion, and patience creating a classroom environment where every child feels valued, comfortable, and happy. Everything she does is centered around her students and their learning. Her lessons are engaging, inclusive, and thoughtfully planned to reach every learner in her room. Students know that Ms. Foley believes in them, and that belief motivates them to do their best. She is the kind of teacher who not only teaches academics but also models kindness, empathy, and perseverance every single day. We need more teachers like Ms. Foley.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 4

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Blair Borish

Position: 8th Grade ELA teacher

School: Kuumba Academy Charter School

School District if applicable: Kuumba Academy Charter School

County of School: New Castle County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Tara Robbins

Your relationship to the Nominee: I am her Principal in our community

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. Borish is a truly phenomenal teacher, passionate about all things ELA, and takes great pride in everything she does. She is certified in middle school ELA, is our school's state testing coordinator, and also has experience as an instructional coach. She has been teaching for 12 years. In my time as a principal, she has been a standout teacher in every way and truly goes above and beyond while also being someone everyone can rely on. Not only does she excel in the classroom, but she is also a lifelong learner, currently earning her doctorate in Educational Leadership, all while managing everything with power and grace. She also just recently passed her School Leadership Licensure exam for principalship, which is an impressive accomplishment.

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

In Ms. Borish's ELA classroom, arts integration came to vibrant life as she utilized a play script to immerse her students in the narrative. By transforming the text into a performative experience, each student not only read their lines but also embodied their characters, fostering a deeper understanding of the story's themes and emotions. The

excitement peaked when Ms. Borish introduced a variety of fun costumes, which allowed students to physically represent their roles and engage with the material in an imaginative way. This hands-on approach not only enhanced their comprehension and retention of the content but also encouraged collaboration, creativity, and a sense of community as they worked together to bring the script to life. It was so enjoyable, and the room was filled with joy, laughter, and connection. She really enjoyed working with this group and was able to create a positive environment. Her communication with parents is impressive; she always maintains high standards and expectations and does everything she can to help her students succeed. Anyone asked about Ms. Borish in middle school would say the same: she is a wonderful teacher who challenges students yet remains kind and relatable by offering engaging lessons that connect to real-world examples. Just the other day, an 8th-grade student told me how happy she was to be in 8th grade and that ELA is her favorite subject because of Ms. Borish. This student didn't like ELA much before, so her saying it's now her favorite shows how much she enjoys learning and finds it fun. Most importantly, these students look forward to her 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.

Ms. Borish exemplifies what it means to be a collaborative educator. As a team lead, she actively encourages open communication among her colleagues, fostering an environment where teachers feel comfortable sharing ideas and resources. For instance, during weekly planning sessions, she brings in various lesson plans and teaching materials that she has found effective, offering them to her teammates to adapt and use in their own classrooms. This spirit of cooperation not only enhances her colleagues' lesson quality but also promotes consistency in student learning experiences across grade levels.

Moreover, Ms. Borish goes above and beyond her role by stepping in to support fellow teachers when they encounter challenges. When a colleague struggled with implementing a new curriculum, Ms. Borish volunteered her time to provide one-on-one coaching, demonstrating pairing practical strategies with empathy. Whether it's organizing workshops to share best practices or simply offering a listening ear, her commitment to collective success creates a strong sense of camaraderie among the staff. By prioritizing collaboration and resource-sharing, Ms. Borish ensures that everyone in her school is equipped to provide the best possible education for their students.

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

Ms. Borish has truly become a remarkable role model for her students, demonstrating professionalism and care in countless ways. In her English Language Arts (ELA) class, she cultivates an environment that promotes both a love for learning and personal growth, which inspires her students to strive for excellence.

One of the most notable aspects of Ms. Borish's professionalism is her commitment to creating a structured and engaging curriculum. She carefully selects texts that resonate with her students' lives and experiences, making literature relatable and relevant. For instance, when studying themes of resilience, she might include contemporary novels alongside classic literature, allowing students to draw connections across different contexts. This not only enhances their understanding of the material but also fosters critical thinking.

In terms of care, Ms. Borish goes above and beyond to ensure that each student feels valued and supported. She takes the time to get to know her students individually, understanding their unique interests, challenges, and learning styles. For example, she often arranges small group discussions where students can express their thoughts in a comfortable setting, ensuring that quieter students have the opportunity to share their insights without feeling intimidated. This practice encourages a sense of community, where everyone's voice is heard.

Furthermore, Ms. Borish is always available for extra help, whether that means staying after school for tutoring sessions or offering personalized feedback on assignments. She understands that each student is on a different educational journey, and she meets them where they are, providing not just academic support, but also emotional encouragement. When a student struggles with a particular assignment, she might spend extra time working through it together, reinforcing their confidence and showing them that perseverance is key.

Additionally, Ms. Borish encourages her students to express themselves creatively. In her class, students are not only tasked with analyzing texts but are also given opportunities to write their own stories, drawing from their experiences. This not only develops their writing skills but also allows them to share their voices, a practice Ms. Borish emphasizes as vital to their development.

Through her professionalism and genuine care, Ms. Borish exemplifies what it means to be an outstanding educator. Her passion for teaching and her commitment to her students' growth, both academically and personally, make her an exceptional role model in the classroom. Ms. Borish has truly become a remarkable role model for her students, demonstrating professionalism and care in countless ways. In her English Language Arts (ELA) class, she cultivates an environment that promotes both a love for learning and personal growth, which inspires her students to strive for excellence.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 5

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Nicole Mason

Position: Teacher

School: Park Lane Elementary

School District if applicable: William Penn SD

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Haleem Jordan

Your relationship to the Nominee: Work Associate

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 Mason is an experienced educator with six years of teaching in the William Penn School District, where she currently serves. She holds a bachelor's degree in Youth Empowerment and Urban Studies from West Chester University, as well as a master's degree in K–12 Education with a focus on Special Education from Widener University. Nicole also earned a master's credential in Principalship, reflecting her commitment to educational leadership. In addition to her classroom experience, she has served as a Lead Teacher and as a District Site Supervisor for the district's Summer Enrichment program. She holds certifications in K–12 Education, Special Education, and School Leadership.

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

Nicole Mason's commitment to her Title I students goes far beyond the classroom walls. One powerful example of her dedication is the creation of a girls' empowerment group aimed at supporting young women in the school community. Recognizing the challenges many of her female students faced—such as low self-esteem, lack of representation,

and limited access to mentorship—Nicole started the group to provide a safe space where young women could build confidence, leadership skills, and strong peer relationships. She led weekly after-school sessions focused on topics like goal-setting, healthy relationships, and self-advocacy, often bringing in guest speakers from the community to inspire and connect with the girls. Nicole even arranged college visits and enrichment outings to expose them to new opportunities and broaden their perspectives. In addition, she launched a "Family Literacy Night" series, bringing together students, parents, and teachers to build a stronger connection between home and school. She translated materials, arranged transportation for families without access, and partnered with community leaders to provide childcare and meals—ensuring every family could participate. Through these efforts and more, Nicole has proven herself to be more than a teacher—she's a mentor, advocate, and changemaker who empowers both students and families to thrive.

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 Lead Teacher in the William Penn School District, Nicole Mason plays a vital role in mentoring her colleagues and fostering a collaborative, high-impact learning environment. She is known for creating a culture of support and shared growth among staff by modeling best practices and offering hands-on coaching. One standout example of her leadership came during the rollout of a new literacy curriculum. While many teachers felt overwhelmed by the shift, Nicole organized and led professional development sessions that broke down the material in practical, accessible ways. She created model lesson plans, co-taught in classrooms to demonstrate new strategies, and held weekly check-ins to address questions and concerns. Her patient, step-by-step guidance helped build teacher confidence and ensured a smoother, more successful implementation across the grade level. Nicole also mentors new teachers in the district, pairing with them regularly to provide feedback, classroom management tips, and emotional support during their first year. One first-year teacher shared that Nicole's mentorship "turned survival into success," crediting Nicole with helping her build both her instructional skills and her confidence. Whether through coaching, co-planning, or simply being a consistent, trusted resource, Nicole leads with empathy and expertise—raising the bar for her peers and helping create a more effective, united teaching community.

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

Nicole Mason is a powerful role model to her students, especially those in the Title I community she serves. She leads by example—showing students what it means to be resilient, compassionate, and committed to personal growth and community service. One powerful example is the girls' empowerment group she founded at her school. Recognizing the unique challenges many of her female students faced, Nicole created a safe space where they could build self-confidence, develop leadership skills, and learn to advocate for themselves. She shared her own journey—being the first in her family to graduate from college and earning advanced degrees in education and leadership—to show them what's possible with hard work and determination. Her transparency and encouragement inspired many of the girls to set higher goals for themselves, both academically and personally. Nicole also models perseverance and professionalism for all her students. Despite her demanding role as a Lead Teacher and District Site Supervisor for Summer Enrichment, she remains present, approachable, and deeply involved in students' lives. Whether staying after school to help with homework, attending extracurricular events, or just listening when a student needs support, Nicole consistently shows up—not because she has to, but because she cares. Through her actions and example, Nicole empowers her students to believe in themselves, work hard, and make a difference in their own communities.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 6

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Amy Caputo

Position: 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: Michael Komorowski

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.**

Amy has been teaching at Sun Valley for over 10 years. She has been teaching math. Amy has transitioned into a role of teacher/interventionist, helping more students than ever!

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

Amy is one of the hardest working people in our building. She dedicates much of her time honing in on her skills and making her classroom environments somewhere students want to be. If you walk into her room, you will see desks, like many typical high school classrooms. You also see comfortable alternative seating. Bean bag chairs, a comfortable carpet, and other alternative comfortable spots for students to sit and get their work done. She is also the biggest Phillies fan I know, and her room is also Phillies themed!

- 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 Amy's new role, she is going above and beyond. She provides resources to not only her students, but her colleagues as well! She has been sharing tips and strategies, putting together formative assessments we can give to our classes to help monitor progress, and jumping into my class to provide extra support. Because of Amy, not only are her students thriving, but also helping my students thrive as well.

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

Amy has one of the kindest hearts in our building. Everyday in the halls, her classroom, or anywhere students are, Amy displays the true meaning of kindness. Any time I would ask Amy if she could come assist in a lesson, or pull out a kid who is struggling and work one-on-one, Amy doesn't hesitate to say no. She comes to work everyday looking to help whoever she can!

APPLICATION NUMBER: 7

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Mallory Gentile

Position: English 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: Annette McKoskey

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.**

Mallory has been teaching for 8 years. She began her career in a Catholic School and moved to public education 4 years ago. She has both her English and history certifications in addition to her reading specialist certification. Throughout her teacher career, Mallory has coached and she has been the varsity field hockey coach for the past two years at Sun Valley High School.

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

It is very clear that Mallory makes her students her priority during the school year. Her dedication to coaching while also teaching honors, on level, and half year electives is impressive. She is constantly changing plans to ensure her students are thriving in and outside of 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.**

Mallory consistently collaborates with colleagues to foster a culture of excellence in the classroom. For instance, she regularly participates in interdisciplinary planning meetings, where she shares innovative teaching strategies and resources that enhance student engagement. One notable example is when she worked with the DCIU to rewrite the American History curriculum. She created new Unit Plans that are keeping the students engaged in the classroom while also challenging them to ensure they are growing academically.

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

This teacher serves as an exceptional role model for her students, both in the classroom and on the athletic field. As the varsity field hockey coach, she demonstrates dedication, leadership, and a commitment to helping students succeed in all areas of their lives. She emphasizes the importance of balancing athletics with academics, regularly checking in with players to ensure they are managing their coursework alongside their sports commitments. Through her coaching, she instills discipline, teamwork, and perseverance, showing students that success is achieved not just on the field but in all aspects of life.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 8

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Scott Anderson
Position: Special Education Teacher K-2
School: Unionville Elementary School
School District if applicable: Unionville-Chadds Ford
County of School: Chester County
Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Kelly Skinner
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.**

Scott Anderson has been a teacher for twenty-seven years. He has a bachelor's degree in special education with a focus on mentally and physically handicapped children. Scott also has a Master's of Education from Cabrini University. He teaches K-2 special education students in the subject areas of language arts and math.

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

Scott recognizes that students need support at various levels and he goes above and beyond what is expected of his caseload, to ensure that all students are getting what they need. While there are many examples of how Mr. Anderson has facilitated excellence in his classroom, one specific example is when he successfully exited a student out of his learning support classroom. He collaborated with the classroom teacher and parents, supported this second grade student, and worked diligently to fill in learning gaps in both language arts and math so that this student could transition back into the general education curriculum. This student is thriving now because of Mr. Anderson's support and diligence to her education. Another example of how Mr.

Anderson has facilitated excellence is when he supported a student with significant medical needs that could no longer come to school. He spent many hours of his free time teaching lessons to this student online in an effort to ensure that this student wouldn't get behind in his learning. This student has been able to transition successfully back into 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.

Scott is in constant communication with all of the staff that work with his students, including teachers, specialists, paraprofessionals, and one-one aides. He mentors new special education teachers to help them get acclimated to new procedures and curriculum. Scott's communication goes beyond facilitating IEP meetings. He attends parent/teacher conferences with general education teachers, has meetings before and after school to discuss student progress and supports that could be put in place, and spends numerous weekends and hours after school to ensure excellence in the classroom.

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

Scott is a role model to his current and past students. During our Senior Stroll celebration where the current graduating class comes back to visit their elementary school teachers, a former student of Scott's shared how inspiring Mr. Anderson was to his school journey. This student had limited English language skills and had many gaps in his academic knowledge when he was in elementary school. Mr. Anderson's former student went on to talk with one of his current students about how much that student reminded him of himself as an elementary child. His inspirational words encouraged the child that he too will grow up to be successful and achieve his goals, just like this student was able to with the support and care of Mr. Anderson. This student was overcome by emotion and filled with gratitude for the support that he received from Mr. Anderson. He proudly stated that he will be the first person in his family to go to college, and he couldn't have gotten there without Scott. Another story was shared from a grandmother who has custody of her granddaughter. She stated that her granddaughter was fortunate to have Mr. Anderson for learning support in language arts from kindergarten through second grade. He taught her online during Covid. She loved how he supported her granddaughter and redirected her, when her attention was

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

fading. She stated that her granddaughter responded well to Mr. Anderson's kind, warm, and caring personality. She always wanted to work hard to please him.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 9

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Sean Samar

Position: 6th Grade Math Teacher

School: Prospect Park School District

School District if applicable: Interboro School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Michael Hooven

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.**

Sean has been a teacher at Prospect Park School in the Interboro School District for 6 years. Sean has a total of 11 years as a teacher. Sean teaches Middle School Mathematics to grade 6. He has been highlighted by our district; for his dedication and innovation in his teaching approach. Sean was a staff spotlight in February of 2024 for the entire Interboro district. This spotlight highlighted his collaborative priorities to focus efforts on workstations including small groups to build competencies while bridging learning gaps.

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

Sean's approach to teaching is one that values the child holistically, greeting students at the door before the class starts, to starting the class on a Do Now prompt/question that is accessible to all learners. Sean's low floor, high ceiling approach invites every student into the learning and promotes perseverance and supports a classroom culture where all students feel capable of engaging with rigorous content. Sean has students celebrate

tehir progress by sharing their responses and strategies, reinforcing the idea that they are working toward a common goal as a learning 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.

Sean works with district level supervisors to further his enhancement of small groups that target instruction for students on their level. Recently, Sean dove into data on district level assessment to identify where his students are and created small groups based on this data. Sean discusses this data with his students as a form of conferencing to grow students' ownership of their education. Sean has sought out support from his grade level colleagues as well as the District Supervisor of Mathematics. Sean has consistently improved student achievement the past three years, securing the highest scores in the district. Sean continues to grow his students in mathematics on the state assessment, creating a model classroom for the district. He skillfully manages three distinct groups, each engaged in different mathematical tasks, while maintaining a clear focus on learning outcomes.

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

Mr. Samar creates a classroom environment where every student's voice is valued. He listens carefully, encourages students to explain their thinking, and highlights different strategies as strengths. This models respect, empathy, and appreciation for diverse perspectives. He holds students to high expectations while providing support, showing that responsibility and success go hand in hand. His consistency in routines, redirections, and follow-through conveys that he cares about students' learning and behavior. Mr. Samar is prepared, organized, and focused, demonstrating what it looks like to take one's work seriously. Students observe his reliability and fairness, which helps them understand the importance of integrity in their own lives. His energy and passion for mathematics show students that learning can be engaging and meaningful. By openly enjoying the content and celebrating student progress, he models lifelong learning and a positive attitude toward school. Through these actions, Mr. Samar not only teaches math skills but also exemplifies the character traits and habits his students need to be successful in school and beyond.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 10

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Melissa Grieshober

Position: School Librarian

School: Cedar Lane Elementary School

School District if applicable: Appoquinimink

County of School: New Castle County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Katelynn Scott

Your relationship to the Nominee: friend and 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.**

Melissa Grieshober is the school librarian at Cedar Lane Elementary school, serving students in grades 1-5. She has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, and two master's degrees - one in Curriculum and Instruction, and another in Library Information Science. She has been teaching since 2004, a variety of elementary grades, and has received various district awards including most recently the BEATS Maker award in the Appo School District.

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

Melissa Grieshober is the School Librarian at CLE and not only serves her own school community with excellence, but she has also taken on additional responsibilities this year for the district librarians to coordinate a district-wide author visit with Newbury Award winning author, Erin Entrada Kelly. Her collaboration with all of our district librarians and schools meant that we all got to enjoy a high caliber activity that truly engaged our MOT community. Not only has Melissa taken the lead on our author visit, she has also coordinated our Appo District Words on Wheels Bookmobile program for

the past two school years, working with district staff to schedule our runs and visits, coordinating volunteers, communicating with the community about the program, and donating her own additional time and energy to make upgrades on the trailer itself. Not only did she work to make the trailer more functional, but she has also been coordinating with a local Scout - working on his Eagle Rank - to add even more wonderful features inside to help the whole process run more smoothly. All of this work has been done while also doing her very full time job at CLE. She is a shining example of what is best in the Appo district - she loves kids, she supports her whole staff, she is a leader amongst librarians, and she is a force for literacy in this community. I am proud to nominate 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.

Melissa was a classroom teacher for years prior to becoming a school librarian - and my own child had the privilege of being in her class. Melissa always worked very closely with her PLC to plan fun activities and give children in her class the opportunity to succeed regardless of their ability level. She found special ways to let kids have jobs in her class that pertained to their interests. Since becoming a school librarian, Melissa collaborates with her entire building - serving as a support and brainstorm partner for all of the grades and content areas. She is very knowledgeable about technology options for teachers to incorporate into their activities, keeping kids on the cutting edge of what they can do in the classroom. She is a part of the Related Arts team in her building, teaching classes alongside of her "specials" partners - making sure that students are well rounded, and collaborating together with other Related Arts teachers to pull off cool building-wide projects like a spring musical, and art galleries.

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

Melissa is one of the most compassionate people I know. She is always kind in the language that she uses with students, slow to anger and fast to love them right where they are. She is patient and even-keeled, demonstrating what appropriate emotional responses look like so that students can model their behavior off of hers. She lives in such a way that kiddos are more calm around her because of her presence and influence. She offers lots of fun reading incentives and programs in her library, which encourages students to become life-long learners, readers, explorers, and researchers.

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

Her commitment to literacy is powerful as kids live in an increasingly digital world - her library space reflects their interests and needs.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 11

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Jacquelyn Lorah

Position: Algebra I Teacher

School: Penn Wood Ninth Grade Academy

School District if applicable: William Penn School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Robert Curry

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. Lorah is a highly qualified and experienced mathematics educator who has dedicated over ten years of service to the William Penn School District. She is a proud graduate of Penn Wood High School, which gives her a unique perspective and deep connection to the students and community she serves. She holds Pennsylvania state certification in Mathematics for grades 7–12. Throughout her career, she has primarily taught Algebra I, a foundational subject that establishes essential skills for success in higher-level mathematics courses. Her expertise in this area has made her a dependable and effective member of the Ninth Grade Academy instructional team. Mrs. Lorah has spent her teaching career working exclusively with ninth-grade students, helping them transition successfully from middle school to high school mathematics. Her lessons emphasize conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and problem-solving. She consistently integrates technology and data-driven strategies to improve student outcomes and engagement in math learning. In addition to her classroom instruction, Mrs. Lorah collaborates with her colleagues to align curriculum and assessments across the grade level. She is known for her professionalism, consistency, and ability to create a positive classroom climate grounded in mutual respect. Her contributions extend beyond instruction, she supports new teachers, participates in schoolwide initiatives,

and helps maintain a strong academic culture within the Ninth Grade Academy. Over her years in the district, Mrs. Lorah has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to student growth and achievement. Her educational background, certification, and extensive teaching experience make her an invaluable part of the Penn Wood community and an asset to the mathematics department.

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

Mrs. Lorah consistently goes above and beyond for her students, academically, emotionally, and personally. Her commitment to ensuring every student succeeds is evident in her daily practice and the positive relationships she builds within her classroom. One example of her dedication is how she uses data to personalize instruction. After each assessment, Mrs. Lorah analyzes results and creates targeted small-group lessons to address specific skill gaps. She often provides one-on-one support for students who need additional help mastering algebraic concepts. Many students who initially struggled with math credit her patience and encouragement for helping them gain confidence and achieve proficiency. Mrs. Lorah also makes intentional efforts to connect math to students' lives. She designs lessons that incorporate real-world applications, such as budgeting, sports statistics, and data analysis from topics that interest her students. This approach not only deepens understanding but also builds engagement and relevance, especially for students who have historically struggled with math motivation. Beyond instruction, Mrs. Lorah takes the time to learn about her students' lives outside the classroom. She checks in when they are struggling, and communicates regularly with families to ensure each child feels supported. Her genuine care has earned her the respect and trust of both students and parents. Her impact is clearly recognized by the school community, students have voted her Teacher of the Year for two consecutive years (2023–2024 and 2024–2025). This honor reflects not just her instructional excellence but also the strong relationships she builds and the sense of belonging she fosters. Mrs. Lorah embodies what it means to go above and beyond. She is a model of compassion, consistency, and excellence, an educator who truly makes a difference in the lives of her students every day.

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. Lorah is an integral member of our school's leadership team and a true collaborator among her peers. She plays a key role in shaping the instructional culture at

the Ninth Grade Academy through her commitment to teamwork, data-driven decision making, and student-centered leadership. As the Mathematics Department Head, Mrs. Lorah co-leads common planning time where teachers collaborate to align instruction, share effective practices, and review student data. She models instructional excellence by bringing well-designed lessons and assessment strategies that others can adapt and use in their classrooms. For example, after noticing a gap in students' understanding of linear equations, she led her team in developing a hands-on lesson series that incorporated graphing technology and real-world applications. This initiative not only increased student engagement but also improved unit assessment scores across all Algebra I classes. Beyond her department, Mrs. Lorah actively contributes to schoolwide initiatives. She regularly participates in leadership meetings to discuss strategies for improving school culture, behavior, and academic outcomes. Her insight and professionalism help guide decisions that positively impact the entire student body. Mrs. Lorah's colleagues describe her as approachable, dependable, and always willing to lend a hand. Whether mentoring new teachers, assisting with classroom management strategies, or helping refine instructional materials, she consistently lifts those around her. Through her leadership, collaboration, and unwavering dedication, Mrs. Lorah has helped foster a culture of excellence where teachers feel supported and students are inspired to achieve. Her work exemplifies the power of teamwork in advancing both student success and professional growth.

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

Mrs. Lorah is an outstanding role model for her students, demonstrating daily what it means to be responsible, respectful, and resilient. Her calm demeanor, professionalism, and genuine care for her students set a powerful example of integrity and perseverance. As a Penn Wood High School graduate herself, Mrs. Lorah often reminds students that success is possible through hard work and determination. She shares her own experiences growing up in the same community, which helps students see her not just as their teacher but as someone who truly understands their journey. Many students have expressed how motivating it is to be taught by someone who once sat in the same classrooms and now leads with pride and purpose. Her influence extends beyond academics. Mrs. Lorah emphasizes the importance of respect, teamwork, and self-advocacy. She celebrates her students' successes, both big and small, and helps them learn from their mistakes in a constructive way. Because of this, her classroom has become a safe and encouraging space where students feel valued and motivated to do

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

their best. Her impact is reflected in her being voted Teacher of the Year by students for two consecutive years (2023–2024 and 2024–2025). This honor demonstrates the admiration and respect her students have for her, not only as an excellent math teacher but as a true role model in character, dedication, and compassion.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 12

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Kerri Confera

Position: World Language 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: Anthony Prinzo

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.**

Kerri Confera is an exceptionally talented and deeply dedicated educator who has spent more than two decades inspiring students through world language instruction. She brings a wealth of experience, having begun her teaching career in 1999 as a long-term substitute at Wilson High School and later as a classroom teacher at Holy Name High School. Since joining the Marple Newtown School District in 2011, she has served at both the middle and high school levels, giving her an exceptional understanding of how students grow as language learners from their initial steps through advanced study. Kerri holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education with concentrations in French and Spanish from Kutztown University (1999), along with a Master's Degree in French from West Chester University (2013). She is certified in Pennsylvania with an Instructional II Teaching Certificate in both French and Spanish. Since joining Marple Newtown High School in 2018, she has taught every level of French we offer—including French 1, 2, 3, 4 Honors, 5 Honors, and AP French—while also previously teaching Spanish 2 and 4 Honors. Throughout her career, she has consistently earned "Proficient" or "Distinguished" ratings on her yearly evaluations, a reflection of both her strong instructional practice and the meaningful connections she builds with students.

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

What makes Kerri truly exceptional is the way she makes students feel seen, supported, and excited to learn. She creates a welcoming, kind, and caring classroom environment that encourages full participation. As noted during a recent walkthrough, "students are very comfortable in her class and are not afraid to volunteer, participate, and speak out loud in front of each other". This level of comfort and respect does not happen overnight; it is a testament to the hard work Kerri puts in daily to ensure her classroom is a safe space. One of the most powerful examples of Kerri going above and beyond is the transformative cultural and travel experiences she brings to her students. She has led multiple student trips to France (2014 & 2017) and served as a group leader for Quebec trips (2012, 2015, 2017) —experiences that countless students still describe as life-changing moments. The preparation for these trips is immense, but she embraces the challenge because she knows how transformational they are. We have seen, time and again, the transformational power of her teaching. For example, we had a student who was incredibly shy and hesitant to even speak in English, much less French. Kerri took the time to understand the student's anxiety, gave them small, achievable tasks, and continually cheered them on. By the end of her AP French class, that student had not only found their academic voice but had the confidence to apply for and successfully gain a competitive study-abroad spot in college. Beyond the classroom, Kerri makes school feel like a true community. She advises the World Language Honor Society, the French Club, the dance team, and the garden club, giving students diverse places to belong, explore interests, and connect with peers. Students know her door is always open, and her commitment to fostering a disciplined yet caring environment is clear—as shown by the fact that 100% of students had their cell phones in the caddy during a recent observation to help the school implement its new cell phone policy.

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.

Kerri is the kind of colleague who quietly makes a school better simply by being part of it. She is generous with her ideas, her time, and her support. She has taken on multiple key leadership roles, serving as the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) teacher liaison and as the teacher liaison for the PTO. In both roles, she acts as a crucial connector, helping ensure communication is clear, decisions are student-centered, and relationships between school, staff, and families remain strong. Her commitment to instructional excellence is evident in her daily practice, which colleagues often model.

Her lessons are active and highly participatory. During a recent walkthrough, the teacher and students were exchanging conversation back and forth in French, and she used techniques to ensure 100% participation from her students. For instance, she had students use mini-whiteboards to jot down words they understood from a video, share them with a partner, and then share with the class. This low-stakes use of whiteboards is an excellent way to gauge student understanding in the moment. Furthermore, she successfully utilized group repetition for vocabulary, where almost every single student participated. Whether she is supporting a new teacher in the department, stepping in to help chaperone various school-wide events, or offering a fresh, innovative idea to spark student engagement, she does so with humility and sincerity. She leads by example—not through titles, but through her steady presence, willingness to help, and genuine love for our school community.

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

Kerri is a role model in every sense of the word. She embodies curiosity, kindness, and integrity, and students see those qualities lived out daily in her classroom. She shows students that learning a language isn't just about vocabulary—it's about connection, empathy, and understanding the world beyond your own experiences. Students admire her because she believes in them, even when they struggle to believe in themselves. Her teaching techniques reflect this belief: she transitions between playing videos, speaking practice, and group activities. She circulates and engages random students in conversation, ensuring everyone feels valued and challenged. She pushes them to speak up in class, to try a sentence in French even if it isn't perfect, and to take risks academically and personally. Students who have worked with Kerri often share that she helped them find their voice—whether that was through French, through a club she advised, or simply through a conversation in her classroom. She has a gift for making each student feel valued, capable, and important. That is the kind of impact that stays with a student long after graduation.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 13

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Sasha Gallagher

Position: Second Grade Teacher

School: Highland Park Elementary School

School District if applicable: Upper Darby

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Patricia Fox

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.**

Sasha has been teaching at our school since 2013. She student taught at our school as a third grade teacher and was then hired as a teacher after graduation. She currently works as a second grade teacher!

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

Sasha knows that it is her role to not just provide students with rich academic programming, but rich social emotional and equity based learning as well. On the classroom environment side, Sasha has poured countless hours into making her classroom one where students can truly feel at peace. Whether through the decorations, lighting, flexible seating, or essential oils, Ms. Gallagher's classroom is one where students can truly feel peaceful and regulated. On the academic side, Ms. Gallagher recently chose to participate in a pilot study for the English Language Arts Curriculum. Knowing that the previous curriculum was not providing students with what they needed, she chose to join a team of teachers testing out a new curriculum that the district believes will better support our students. Sasha has worked tirelessly to

understand this new curriculum (with minimal training since it is just a pilot) to make sure that she understands what she is teaching and is teaching it to fidelity. She has been a fierce advocate for this curriculum to administrators, seeing how it has benefitted her students. On the social emotional learning side, Ms. Gallagher has created a classroom environment centered around supporting student needs. Not only does she recognize that different students need different supports, skills or seating to thrive, but she helps all students listen to their bodies and make adjustments to be ready to learn. She is constantly instilling in students the power of understanding their emotions and finding ways to express their feelings and regulate. Additionally, Ms. Gallagher cares about each of her students personally. Just this week when one of her students came in with shoes that were too tight, Ms. Gallagher used her planning period to go out to the store and pick up some new shoes for her students that would fit so she wasn't in pain. Finally on the diversity side, Ms. Gallagher sees each student for their unique identity and constantly looks for ways to uplift and celebrate students for who they are and where they come from.

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. Gallagher works alongside her peers to make sure that all their needs are provided for and that her grade level team has everything they need to successfully educate their own students. She co-plans diligently with the special education teachers in order to make sure that students have all the accommodations and modifications they deserve to receive the best education possible. In piloting the new ELA curriculum she attended various check ins with other teachers piloting the program to hear what was working for them or what struggles they were having so that they could learn from one another. Additionally, Ms. Gallagher leads the Equity Team at our school. She believes that students of all identities, backgrounds and cultures deserve to have their experiences elevated. She has worked with other staff members to plan professional development for the staff so that our building becomes a place where all students and faculty members can feel a sense of belonging.

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

Ms. Gallagher is a role model for her students in that she is a lifelong learner. Ms. Gallagher is always seeking out opportunities to learn more, attend professional development or join teams that will facilitate learning for her students. She is also an

avid reader, both by herself and with her daughter. She is always looking for new books to read to her class. She is eager to learn about new books that I have received in the library whether they are about content area knowledge or social emotional learning. On several occasions I have received new shipments of books and upon realizing that she would like them, taken them right to her, and on several occasions she has used the books within a week or so with her class. Ms. Gallagher is also not afraid to model regulation strategies with her students. Just as she teaches students how to regulate their emotions to focus in class, she also models her own regulation with students during class. When she is overstimulated from interruptions or noises in the building she is not afraid to tell students that she needs to use a strategy to refocus. Ms. Gallagher is also an incredibly encouraging person! When I first joined the staff in 2022 she was constantly encouraging me and telling me how glad she was that I had joined the team. So many people in our building feel seen and loved by Sasha!

APPLICATION NUMBER: 14

Application 1 of 2 for Jill Hoffner

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Jill Hoffner

Position: 2nd grade teacher

School: Edgewood Elementary School

School District if applicable: Ridley School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Marcia DeSantis

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

Jill attended Springfield High School and West Chester University to study education. She has been a dedicated 2nd-grade teacher at Edgewood Elementary for over 30 years. She earned her master's degree in elementary education and continued to take classes to keep current on the best practices for her students for another 45+ post-graduate credits.

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

Jill is constantly thinking of her students and their needs, both personal and educational. She provides snacks, lunches, breakfasts, clothes, shoes, personalized water bottles, and all the love and support her kids need. She has paid for field trips for students who could not afford them. She currently keeps extra sweatshirts in her classroom because some of her students didn't have sweatshirts or sweaters when it got cold. She even takes them home to wash in special detergent because one student commented on how much she loves the smell. If a student is not making progress, she searches high and low

to find new ways to try and break through. She often comes in early to provide additional tutoring to her students for free. She calls me many mornings in the car, on our way into school, to tell me she was thinking of a student the night before. She wants to brainstorm what more we can do for them, so we don't waste time once we get to school. She truly loves and cares for them as she does her own children.

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.

Jill first partnered with me when I taught special education, and we were co-teaching our shared students. Even though Jill is a master teacher with a wealth of knowledge and strategies for teaching her students, she is always looking to learn from others. There is no ego involved with her; she thinks only of what is best for her students. She wants to know everything I am doing with her children so she can support and reinforce it when they return to her class, on top of her own teaching. She has helped multiple students achieve IEP goals and eventually be able to exit special education. Since I became the school reading specialist, she has been one of my most valued and efficient partners in helping students learn to read and overcome reading disabilities. A current 5th grader, who is now reading above benchmark, was a non-reader coming into Jill's second-grade class. By the end of the year, he had achieved all of his kindergarten, first, and second-grade benchmarks to be reading on the second-grade level. Jill successfully moved this student through 2 and a half years of reading instruction in one school year. This year, 2 of her students from last year, were able to exit reading support within the first 6 weeks of school because of Jill's efforts all last year. Another reading support student in her class just reached all of his benchmarks after only the first 6 weeks in her room, and no longer needs to work with me. Jill supports all of my interventions, and many of her kids move multiple levels in their reading abilities.

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

Jill is a lifelong learner. She models her love of learning to her students. She literally does cartwheels for them when they return from my room and informs her that they moved up a level. She creates a community where they learn to support each other, and celebrate each other, just as Jill tries to do for her colleagues and students alike. In addition to all she does for our school, Jill volunteers at her church, making meals for and visiting the elderly of her parish. She also volunteers with Bringing Hope Home, a nonprofit organization that provides financial and emotional support for families going

through cancer. She is an absolutely wonderful woman, who I am blessed to call my friend.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 15

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Brittaney Weeks

Position: Math Interventionist and 21st CCLC Lead 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: 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.**

Brittaney has taught 5th grade at Sharon Hill School previously and is not the Math Interventionist at Sharon Hill School. Brittaney also plays an active role on the PBIS team and is the Lead Teacher of the 21st CCLC After School Enrichment Program. Brittaney has also completed the requirements for a PA principal certification with further demonstrates her natural leadership abilities.

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

In addition to working with small math groups during the day, I have attended after school PBIS events that were planned by Brittaney. The events are well organized and well attended. Families always express their appreciation for her efforts. Brittaney also makes sure our After School Enrichment Program is a safe and academically rigorous learning environment.

- 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.**

Recently, Brittaney had a death in her family. Although she was staying strong during the difficult time, she made her students a priority by making sure all of her daytime and after school students had what she needed during her bereavement leave. Brittaney even came to the after school program on one of her days off just to make sure the students were all setup for success. Her commitment to her job and students is applaudable.

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

Brittaney is a role model for her students because she comes to work with a positive attitude every day and stresses the importance of education. Brittaney leads by example for both students and staff. Brittaney is always looking for ways to make school a more fun, loving, and positive experience for our students, while holding them to the highest standard. While pushing our students to succeed, Brittaney also offers safety nets so students won't fall.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 16

Application 1 of 2 for Ashley Chamberlain

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Ashley Chamberlain

Position: Autistic support teacher

School: Darby township school

School District if applicable: southeast Delco school district

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Naloni Jackson

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.**

Ms. Chamberlain has been teaching in this district for four years. This year she had become tenured. She teaches autistic support in middle school.

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

Since working with Ms. Chamberlain, she has been working hard to make sure that her students to achieve their goals and find new coping 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.**

When I first came into the classroom, Ms. Chamberlain was so nice. She introduced me to the student and gave me a run down of how she wants to work together. She always made sure the the classroom felt like a safe space for students and adults in the classroom.

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

When a conflict arises she tends to stay calm and be to herself.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 17

Application 2 of 2 for Ashley Chamberlain

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Ashley Chamberlain

Position: Special Education Teacher

School: Darby township school

School District if applicable: South east delco

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Noelle Jeffery

Your relationship to the Nominee: colleges

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 graduated teaching school she has put in all her time and effort for her to become the teacher that she is.

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

Everyday this women goes above and beyond for her students. When they don't have something she makes sure they get. She does whatever she can 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.**

She works tirelessly along side her colleges

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

She make sure that the kids know right from wrong and even provides visuals so that the kids can really understand

APPLICATION NUMBER: 18

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Lisa Cothery

Position: 7th Grade Math Teache

School: Darby Township School

School District if applicable: Southeast Delco School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Shannon Hill

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. Cothery has been teaching at Darby Township School for roughly 19 years. In her time here, Ms. Cothery has only taught 7th grade Math in her time at Southeast Delco School District. Ms. Cothery has a certification in Middle School Mathematics.

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

In her time here, the middle school team has turned over again and again. Ms. Cothery has always been the pillar of stability for her building, her team, and most importantly-her students. Ms. Cothery connects with her students in a way that has them aching to be back in her class even years after they have left elementary school. Each day, after we dismiss, you will likely find a former student waiting outside to say hello to Ms. Cothery and openly tell her how much they miss her class. Ms. Cothery is the perfect mix an old school teacher, with a new school attitude. She holds her students to high standards, but always fosters the opportunities to teach them how to uphold the standards. Ms Cothery is here each morning, most days before anyone else, and getting herself ready for the day. In those quiet morning hours, she will reflect on what she

needs to do to help her students learn best, she will research un projects that resonate with the students, and make math feel meaningful. Ms. Cothery has always gone above to show her students how much she cares about them in and out of school. She listens to their stories, encourages their dreams, and comforts/supports them when they need it most.

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. Cothery's middle school team has been ever evolving over the last 5 years or so. As the senior teacher, she has taken the lead to help acclimate all fo the new teachers that have joined. She welcomes them with an open door. Ms. Cothery will answer questions, help learn new technology and strategies, review school procedures over and over again until someone understands it, be a soundboard, act as a voice of reason on the days when we feel like we can't do it anymore, and support us through it all always saying "what can I do to help you?" Ms. Cothery is the go-to for all middle school teachers and she is the glue that creates the team and hold them all together.

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

Ms. Cothery forever demonstrates kindness and empathy. She leads by example. Last week she got wind of a student who had a particularly rough night at home. She overheard other students talking about it. Without a second thought, Ms. Cothery got to the bottom of the situation and sprang into action. Within 5 minutes that student was at the counselor, and she got him breakfast knowing he likely hadn't eaten anything, and also aske around to get him a fresh t-shirt for the day. In a moment when that student was having a really bad day, she stepped in to help make it better when she could have just ignored it and went on with her day.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 19

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Lisa Jesse

Position: Elementary Reading Specialist Teacher

School: Garrettford Elementary

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.**

Vince Lombardi, the incredibly successful football coach is quoted as saying, "Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." Mrs. Lisa Jesse's commitment to the Garrettford community, its students and staff embodies Coach Lombardi's theory. She is an ideal candidate to be nominated to receive the Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union Foundation's Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award. Lisa Jesse taught in Delaware for over a decade, where she was a special education and reading specialist teacher. She has a Master's Degree from Wilmington University. In 2018 Mrs. Jesse started her career in Upper Darby School District as a reading specialist at Garrettford Elementary. In the few years she has been at our school, she has made a profound impact on students and her colleagues. She now serves as the school's instructional leader in literacy. Her main responsibilities are guiding evidence-based reading practices, supporting curriculum alignment, and coaching teachers in effective strategies, but she does so much more!

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

Mrs. Jesse analyzes student literacy data to drive instruction, leads professional development, and fosters a school-wide culture that values reading and lifelong learning. She also serves as a mentor teacher to new staff. She guides and supports new teachers by sharing instructional strategies, modeling literacy practices, and providing coaching on classroom management, lesson planning, and assessment. Lisa has also served as a Pilot Program participant, where she collaborates with district and school leaders to test and implement new instructional programs, interventions, or resources. She then provides feedback and also models best practices for staff during the rollout phase. Mrs. Jesse annually organizes and participates in a family literacy event designed to build a love of reading, strengthen home-school connections, and provide parents with strategies to support literacy at home. She also coordinates the Young Authors writing entries from Garrettford for the County-wide Delaware County IU contest each year. She is most impressive, however, in the exceptional way she works directly with students to increase reading proficiency and build relationships. Mrs. Jesse recently agreed to be one of two Moderators to re-establish the Garrettford Student Council, something that fell by the wayside during the Pandemic. This program helps fifth grade students to develop leadership skills and gain agency over things that go on in our 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 a PBIS team member, she works with the school's PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) team to define expectations, monitor behavioral data, and create strategies that promote a safe, respectful, and responsible school culture. We have monthly Student of the Month assemblies and operate a "Bucket Buck" store where students can purchase rewards with the "bucks" they earn for good behavior. Lisa also helps with fundraisers to support the team's activities. The PBIS team also sponsors staff activities to build morale and help create a positive work environment. An educator's positive attitude and emotional well-being directly impacts the learning environment for students. Happy teachers make for happy classrooms, and this leads to successful learning. As part of this team, Mrs. Jesse helped with staff initiatives such as organizing a staff kickball game, setting up a soft drink station equipped with personalized staff cups during one of the hottest days of the school year, and helping to set up our new faculty lounge. Garrettford has been without a faculty lounge for almost two decades due to overcrowding in the school. This room has been long needed! We also use the room for student activities, such as our recent "glow room" we set up for the students to celebrate in during our fall festival. Mrs. Jesse also serves as a Student

Support Team (SST) Facilitator. She leads the SST process by coordinating meetings, reviewing academic and behavioral data, and developing intervention plans to meet the needs of struggling students. She ensures communication between the teachers, families and support staff to make sure students in need are being supported from every angle.

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

As a Tier 2 Behavior Support Team member, Mrs. Jesse helps identify students in need of targeted behavioral supports, participates in developing Tier 2 interventions (such as Check-In/Check-Out), and collaborates with teachers to reinforce positive behavior. She is truly a teacher champion for students! She serves as a positive advocate for students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions by building strong relationships, providing encouragement, and helping monitor progress toward behavior and academic goals. One other way Mrs. Jesse is a Garrettford community builder is that she volunteers to help run the talent show. She assists with planning, organizing, and supervising the school talent show, encouraging student creativity, building school spirit, and fostering a positive sense of community. Her knowledge, resourcefulness, positive attitude and effective communication are the foundation of Lisa's work. She is an integral part of so many key elements to the success of our school and she makes a difference in the lives of students and staff every day. Mrs. Jesse deserves to be recognized for her tremendous contributions and her excellence in teaching.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 20

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Sarah Damato

Position: Special Education Teacher Multiple Disabilities

School: Springfield High School

School District if applicable: Springfield

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Colette Tropiano

Your relationship to the Nominee: Former student assistant

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 education teacher of students with severe disabilities. Sarah has been teaching for 13 years. She worked in west Philly and has been at SHS for 7 years. She works with students from 9th-12th grade students with Down syndrome, Autism and intellectual disability. She has won many teaching awards such as Special Education teacher of the year, heart of learning award, making a difference award and many more.

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

When you think of an educator, you think of someone who is committed and brings happiness, laughter, discipline, mentorship, inclusivity and most importantly learning to the classroom. But when I think of Sarah and what she brings to a classroom, especially her classroom. It is unmatched. Sarah has been a Special Education teacher for 12 years and at Springfield High School in Delaware County for the past 7 years, and the amount of effort, love and passion she gives to her students and to the countless 1 on 1s and

student teacher assistants (TAs) that help within her classroom every day; is unlike anything I've seen or heard of. From the countless community based outings Sarah has taken her class on throughout her years of teaching at Springfield High School, the memorable and laughable teaching moments, the highs and lows Sarah has endured, I know there was never a dull teaching moment to say the least. I've been fortunate enough myself to work with some of Sarah's students. Sarah and myself own a non-profit called SAS which gives children with disabilities and of all ages the opportunity to participate in sports just as every other child could and I would say at least half of her students have participated in this program. So, I know with the smiles I see on the kids' faces and the effort they give when they play the sports they participate in, it is no different than when in Sarah's classroom at the high school. By creating SAS, Sarah's outreach to students with special needs goes beyond the classroom and into the community. Sarah runs the schools buddies program which has grown from 20 students to 350 students. The club consist of students with and without IEPs. They do events outside of school so that the students with disabilities have something to do. They can hang with their peers and their peers get to know them! What Sarah is doing is promoting inclusion for all students. When we are out students get excited when they see Sarah. They all feel involved and included.

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.

To me something else that goes hand-in-hand with Sarah's teaching abilities and may not always be noticed by other staff around the school, is the student to teacher relationships that Sarah has with her countless teacher assistants. Teacher assistants are students in general education who can request to help out in a teachers classroom. This year alone, Sarah had 16 TAs. Because Sarah is that teacher, when there is an opportunity for a student to fill the need to be a TA in her class, the spots are not vacant for very long. And this also fits in with her being a coach at the HS in Lacrosse, Field Hockey, and the head unified bocce coach for the students in her classroom. Sarah is, defined as what a teacher should be, someone who is caring, supportive, a hard worker and in another sense a mother figure to the students within her classroom. I know Sarah's TAs look forward to coming into her class day in and day out and at the same time taking pride in helping to make a difference with her students and giving them the support necessary to succeed in a classroom and social setting. As well as to show everyone that her students are just like everyone else no matter what their disability is or what someone may look like.

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

Like I described above, Mrs. Damato encourages everyone to be involved, make new friends and to always be kind. She always says you never know what people are going through.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 21

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Jessica Smith

Position: Third Grade Teacher

School: Bethel Springs Elementary School

School District if applicable: Garnet Valley

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Tara Allen

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. Jessica Smith has served as an educator in the Garnet Valley School District for 18 years. She is certified in both Elementary Education K–6 and Special Education N–12. Throughout her career, she has taught third grade and has been the longstanding team leader for her grade level. In addition to her classroom responsibilities, Mrs. Smith has contributed to district-level work as a curriculum writer and has participated in numerous instructional initiatives, including the Instructional Impact Team. She has completed Responsive Classroom training as well as multiple summer institutes. Her ongoing commitment to professional growth and her leadership in implementing new curriculum reflect her dedication to excellence in teaching and learning.

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

Mrs. Jessica Smith consistently goes above and beyond for her students by creating a learning environment where every child feels valued, supported, and capable of growth. This year, her class presented an unusually wide range of academic and behavioral needs. Rather than being overwhelmed, she responded with tireless dedication and

creativity. She personalized instruction, adapted materials, and collaborated closely with specialists to ensure each student received what they needed to be successful. As a result, students who entered the year struggling academically or socially made meaningful gains in both confidence and achievement. One example that illustrates her commitment occurred during a particularly challenging stretch in the fall, when several students required intensive support. Mrs. Smith reorganized her classroom routines, implemented new behavior systems, and worked closely with families and support staff to create a cohesive plan that centered on student dignity and growth. Her calm presence and consistent follow-through transformed the classroom into a place where students felt safe, understood, and ready to learn. Another way she goes beyond expectations is through the community she builds. She holds morning meetings, quiet time, and closing circle every day, ensuring students begin and end their day feeling connected. Her teacher language is intentionally reinforcing and student-centered, helping learners develop confidence and empathy. Families often share how they see and support their children in her care. Her impact extends beyond the four walls of her classroom. When her team faced fatigue and discouragement this year, she modeled vulnerability, reflection, and resilience—qualities that directly benefited her students. Her ability to remain positive, consistent, and fully present allowed her class to thrive during a difficult 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.

Mrs. Jessica Smith is a deeply collaborative educator whose work alongside her colleagues has directly elevated instructional practices and strengthened the overall classroom environment across the grade level. As the longstanding third grade team leader, she creates a space where teachers feel supported, valued, and safe to bring ideas forward. Her ability to guide her team with clarity and compassion has been essential, especially during years of significant change. One example of her collaborative impact occurred during the implementation of the new ELA curriculum. Jessica helped her team navigate the transition by organizing shared planning sessions, inviting instructional coaches to join meetings, and modeling how to unpack units and analyze assessments together. Her approach lightened the load for colleagues while ensuring that all classrooms delivered high quality, consistent instruction. Jessica also regularly collaborates with specialists—including co teachers, special education teachers, reading specialists, and math specialists—to design meaningful supports for students. She welcomes them into her classroom, integrates their expertise into daily instruction, and models strong partnership practices. These collaborations have helped create cohesive

supports for students across multiple settings. Her contributions to district work further demonstrate her commitment to excellence. Through her involvement in the Instructional Impact Team and her role as a curriculum writer, she brings a teacher's perspective to district-level decisions and then translates that learning back to her team. She has also participated in multiple assistant principal searches, offering thoughtful insights that shape the school's leadership. This year in particular, Jessica helped her team maintain unity, trust, and shared ownership during moments of fatigue and challenge. Her steady presence, reflective nature, and ability to connect with others kept the team grounded and focused. She built a collaborative culture where teachers felt supported, students benefited from aligned practices, and the grade level operated as a true community.

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

Mrs. Jessica Smith is a powerful role model for her students, demonstrating daily what it means to be kind, resilient, and committed to growth. Her students learn as much from observing her actions as they do from her lessons. One of the clearest examples of her modeling is the way she navigated this year's particularly challenging class dynamic. Even when students struggled with behavior, frustration, or peer conflict, Mrs. Smith remained calm, steady, and compassionate. Students watched her address problems with fairness and respect, showing them how to manage emotions, repair relationships, and persist through difficulties. Her consistency helped students understand that challenges are part of learning, and that how we respond matters. Through Responsive Classroom routines, she models important social skills every day. Morning meetings allow students to see her greet each child with warmth and attention, reflecting the value of community. During quiet time and closing circle, she demonstrates reflection and gratitude, showing students what it looks like to pause, think, and end the day with intention. Mrs. Smith's teacher language also serves as a model. She uses affirming, student-centered communication that highlights effort, progress, and collaboration. Students hear her celebrate perseverance, thoughtful choices, and kindness, and they begin to mirror those behaviors among themselves. She also models curiosity and a love of learning. Whether she is trying a new instructional strategy, refining a lesson, or applying ideas from professional development, she shows students that adults continue to grow too. This mindset encourages them to take risks and embrace challenges as opportunities. Above all, Jessica models integrity and authenticity. Her students see an

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

adult who is genuine, caring, and consistent—someone who shows up each day ready to do her best for them. They learn from her example what it means to be part of a community, to treat others with respect, and to believe in their own potential. Her influence extends far beyond academics; she is shaping the kind of people her students will become.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 22

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Lindsay Kelley

Position: Kindergarten Teacher

School: Wayne Elementary School

School District if applicable: Radnor School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Jennifer Levin

Your relationship to the Nominee: Parent (My son is in her class)

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. Lindsay Kelley is an experienced Kindergarten educator at Wayne Elementary School with over 10 years of dedicated teaching experience in elementary education. Throughout her career, she has built an outstanding reputation in the local community, leaving a lasting positive impact on her students and their families. Parents and community members continue to speak fondly of the meaningful influence Mrs. Kelley has had on their children's educational journeys and personal development.

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

Mrs. Kelley infuses creativity into her lessons and activities daily. She seamlessly integrates multiple subject areas to create meaningful learning experiences. For example, she combined literacy centers with a sensory bin where students practiced phonics skills. In another lesson, she had students collect leaves and explore their attributes while reinforcing math concepts they were studying. These creative, hands-on approaches make learning engaging and memorable for our kids. Mrs. Kelley regularly posts videos and pictures that show parents what and how their children are learning in

school. This transparency builds trust and helps families understand their child's educational experience.

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. Kelley goes above and beyond to maintain strong communication with families. She keeps parents informed about what students are learning, how they are learning it, and provides practical tools and strategies to support learning at home. Her deep knowledge of each student—understanding their educational abilities, personal strengths, and individual needs—allows her to tailor instruction to meet every child where they are. She demonstrates genuine care and attention that rivals a parent's own understanding of their child.

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

The impact of Mrs. Kelley's dedication is evident in her students' enthusiasm. Her natural gift for patiently guiding students while modeling confidence and strength creates a classroom environment where children are excited to learn and grow.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 23

Application 1 of 4 for Maureen Mylotte

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: Alexandra Gentile

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.**

Maureen has been teaching for over 28 years. She has taught 1st grade, been an instructional coach to help support other teachers, and is currently a reading specialist. She is the team leader and analyzes data to make sure her students are getting what they need, while also helping other teachers learn best practices with reading.

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

Maureen spends her weekends thrifting or going to buy nothing groups in order to fundraise and receive items that she can pass onto students at school as rewards and prizes. As a Title 1 school we have to be creative with how we reward students and Maureen tirelessly works to make sure our students have rewards. She also goes out of her way to make her reading lessons engaging for students who struggle the most.

- 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 runs PBIS (positive behavior intervention and supports) for our school as a volunteer. She runs monthly Student of the Month Assemblies where she recognizes students and staff, and plans monthly incentives to reward students for good school behavior. For many years Maureen has led the social committee to help the school environment, and the student council club.

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

Maureen brings so much joy and love of reading to the classroom. She is always positive, and frequently wears clothing bearing positive messages such as "be kind" or "Readers are Leaders". Everyone wants to be in Maureen's class!

APPLICATION NUMBER: 24

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Dan Hill

Position: English Teacher

School: Sun Valley High School

School District if applicable: Penn Delco

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Marc Baron

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.**

28 year educator in the Penn Delco School District. Graduate of St. Joseph's University. 28 year educator in the Penn Delco School District. 21 years, English teacher at Sun Valley High School 7 years, Assistant Principal at Northley Middle School 6 years, English Remediation teacher at the Delaware County Juvenile Detention Center Developed Sun Valley's Work Experience Program Coach, 9th grade football Coach, 9th Grade Baseball Assistant Coach, Varsity Wrestling under PA Hall of Fame Coach Chuck Grassano Coached Varsity Wrestling Coached Varsity Tennis PA Announcer at Sun Valley Home Athletics Contests.

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

Dan Hill is an English teacher in the Penn Delco School District. A graduate of St. Joseph's University, Dan has been heavily immersed in the Penn Delco community in many facets. Dan coached varsity wrestling, freshman football, and freshman baseball. Dan has always advocated for at risk students and reluctant learners. He is a

confidence booster, and an incredible model for all. Dan is respected because he gives respect. He asks to teach the most challenging students, and gives them often their only safe space. Outside of Sun Valley, Dan also taught remediation classes at the Delaware County Juvenile Detention Center. He stepped away from teacher/ counseling incarcerated youth and from coaching to assume a role as Assistant Principal at Northley Middle School. Health concerns caused Dan to walk away from administration after a number of years. You see, Dan lives with PKD - polycystic kidney disease. He left Northley to happily return to his high school English classroom, yet he still began coaching varsity tennis. He became the "Voice of the Valley," and can still be heard at home athletic competitions as the PA announcer. Dan also was integral in developing Sun Valley's work experience program, helping student prepare to enter the workforce by monitoring them along their pathway to graduation. Last year, his health caught up with him, and he was forced to leave Sun Valley for a kidney transplant. Both of his kidneys were removed, and his cousin miraculously matched as a donor. The path to recovery was difficult, yet Dan returned before the end of the school year to administer his students final exams and attend graduation. Dan Hill is back at Sun Valley this year, teaching 10th and 11th grade English full time. He lives in Clifton Heights with his wife, Maryanne, and three daughters.

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 previous response adequately addressed this prompt.

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

The previous response adequately addressed this prompt.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 25

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Andreas Diamantas

Position: Health and PE Teacher

School: Stephen Decatur School

School District if applicable: School District of Philadelphia

County of School: Philadelphia County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Jeannine Goetz

Your relationship to the Nominee: 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.**

Health and Physical Education teacher, Andreas Diamantas, affectionately known as Coach D., has been an integral part of the Stephen Decatur School community since joining at the start of the 23-24 school year. His HPE lessons are engaging, dynamic, and related to the lived experiences of our students. Most recently, after completing a mini unit on the benefits of proper hydration, his 3rd grade students participated in a poster making activity to promote hydration at all of our school's filling stations. These posters were laminated and hung around the building for all to see - with the winning students being awarded refillable Gatorade water bottles.

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

In addition to his classroom responsibilities, Coach D. is an essential part of Decatur's PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) Team. This team's goal is to create a positive and proactive school environment for students and staff. Coach D. helps plan and implement monthly incentive events that students can earn participation in - ranging from a trivia contest to an end of the year water balloon toss. Similarly, Coach D.

gives additional time to be present and visible to support a safe and welcoming student admission at the start of each school day! Alongside our dedicated Home and School Association, Coach D. plans and organizes our annual Field Day in June. From setting up nearly 16 interactive stations for students to assigning parent volunteers, Coach D. works tirelessly to ensure that this day is one to remember for all of our students. Along with 8th grade student volunteers, he works weekly with our Autistic Support classrooms to learn and practice these Field Day Games to guarantee their total inclusion in this event. Staff and students alike agreed that Field Day 2025 was the best one yet thanks to Coach D.'s efforts!

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.

This past school year Coach D. took on the task of mentoring a new colleague on the HPE Team. He took this first year teacher under his wing, showing him everything from best practices in classroom management to how to stay organized when teaching nearly 500 students per week just as Coach D. does. This new teacher's great success may not have been possible without the direct guidance provided by Coach D.

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

In order to provide our middle school students with athletic opportunities that prepare them for high school, Coach D. helps lead our sports program and coaches 3 out of 9 teams. Coaching soccer, boys basketball, and track and field allows Coach D. to build positive relationships and grow our student-athletics on the field and as young adults. In order to provide them with the most dynamic program, Coach D. also worked to secure a Good Sports Grant that awarded our students with athletic equipment and gear to ensure their success.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 26

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Michael McGarvey

Position: CFES Technology Specialist & Integrator

School: Chadds Ford Elementary

School District if applicable: Chadds Ford Unionville

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Margaret Marinzoli

Your relationship to the Nominee: parent of children who attend Chadds Ford Elementary

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. McGarvey has been teaching in the Chadds Ford School District for 16 years, he started as the District Autistic Support Coach and held the position for 12 years. He has been the Technology Specialist and Integrator for the last 4 years at Chadds Ford Elementary.

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

Mr. McGarvey exemplifies what it means to be an innovative, dedicated, and community-driven educator. His passion for inspiring students to use their voices and creativity has transformed our school community in truly remarkable ways. Mr. McGarvey is a true innovator. He envisioned and created a brand-new Media Lounge at Chadds Ford Elementary, a dynamic, modern space that empowers students to express themselves through podcasting and digital media. This unique environment has given students the tools and confidence to engage in meaningful discussions about topics that matter deeply to them and to our broader community. His impact extends far beyond

the classroom walls. Mr. McGarvey has encouraged students to think critically, act compassionately, and use their creativity to make a difference. My daughter, Chloe, is one of many students who has been profoundly influenced by his guidance. He challenged her to use her voice and passion to raise awareness about Autism and inclusivity within our community. Under his mentorship, she created a powerful podcast segment and conducted an inspiring interview with a member of the Philadelphia Eagles Autism Foundation, an experience that not only deepened her understanding but also amplified an important message of acceptance, awareness and kindness. Mr. McGarvey didn't stop there. He played an integral role in leading and supporting Chloe's fundraising and awareness efforts throughout the school year. He organized creative initiatives and broadcasted compelling messages about Autism awareness on the school's news program. His leadership helped spark a school-wide coin drive that raised over \$3,000 for the Eagles Autism Foundation, a testament to his ability to inspire action and compassion in others. Mr. McGarvey's innovative teaching methods and dedication to his students have even gained recognition beyond our school. His creativity and the impact of his media program were highlighted in a feature by NBC10 News, showcasing his commitment to education, inclusion, and community engagement. Through his vision, encouragement, and tireless efforts, Michael McGarvey has created a culture where students feel empowered, valued, and motivated to make a difference. He represents the very best of what education can and should be innovative, inclusive, and inspiring.

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. Michael McGarvey is not only an inspiring teacher to his students but also a collaborative leader among his peers. He consistently works alongside fellow educators, administrators, students, PTO members and parents to foster excellence, creativity, and a shared sense of community within the school. His dedication to teamwork and his willingness to go above and beyond have made him a trusted and respected member of the entire school family. Mr. McGarvey is known for his open-door approach. He is always willing to help with any project that comes from fellow teachers, administrators, students, or even parents. Whether it's offering technical support, brainstorming ideas, or helping bring a creative vision to life, he is the first to volunteer his time and expertise. Colleagues often share ideas knowing that Mr. McGarvey will not only assist but elevate the project through his creativity and enthusiasm. His generosity with his time and ideas has raised the level of innovation throughout the school. His talents extend beyond the classroom as well. Mr. McGarvey produces outstanding school

videos that highlight the heart of our community showcasing school activities, concerts, and special events in a way that captures the pride and spirit of our students and staff. These videos serve as both a celebration and a unifying force, allowing everyone in the school and community to share in the accomplishments of our students.

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

Mr. Michael McGarvey is an extraordinary role model who leads by example through kindness, creativity, and a genuine passion for helping others. When you walk into Mr. McGarvey's classroom, you are immediately welcomed with a smile and a sense of belonging. He takes the time to speak with everyone including current and former students, colleagues, and parents alike, making each person feel valued and heard. His classroom is a place of energy, encouragement, and innovation, where every student feels inspired to explore their potential. Mr. McGarvey's classroom environment is a true reflection of his teaching philosophy: learning through creativity and hands-on exploration. You can't help but be inspired by the projects that fill his room: 3D-printed designs, robotics builds, coding projects, and multimedia creations, all showcasing the imagination and talent of his students. He encourages them to take ownership of their learning, to ask questions, to take risks, and to think outside the box. Mr. McGarvey is more than a teacher. He is a mentor, a motivator, and a role model. Through his positivity, innovation, and unwavering support, he inspires his students not only to learn but to believe in themselves and their ability to make an impact.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 27

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Christine DiAntonio

Position: Special Education Teacher

School: Concord Elementary School

School District if applicable: Garnet Valley

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Adam M. Penning

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 DiAntonio has been teaching for over 15 years in a variety of roles. For the last 5 years she has been instrumental in supporting our youngest students in Kindergarten as a special education teacher.

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

Christine consistently goes above and beyond in her role, particularly during early intervention meetings. These meetings can be overwhelming for families navigating new diagnoses and transitions, but Christine approaches them with care and clarity. She creates a welcoming environment, ensuring parents feel heard and supported rather than overwhelmed. Her ability to build strong, trusting relationships with both students and their families has been a difference-maker, helping to ease difficult transitions and foster genuine collaboration. Parents often leave these meetings feeling empowered, thanks to Christine's empathy, professionalism, and deep commitment to student 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.

In addition to her work with our youngest learners, Christine is a valued collaborator among her peers. She supports a wide range of adults in the building, including teachers, aides, and support staff, bringing a unique blend of humor, clarity, and high expectations to every interaction. Christine is known for her student-centered mindset, which sets the tone in team meetings and co-teaching environments. Colleagues actively seek her out, not just because of her expertise, but because she brings out the best in others. Whether she's mentoring a new staff member or partnering on a challenging student case, Christine models what it means to lead with both heart and precision

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

Christine models the kind of grounded, compassionate leadership we hope all students will carry into their own lives. She is the ultimate family person—steadfast in her support of her own family, and just as committed to the students and staff around her. In the classroom, she helps students understand what it means to stay calm under pressure, often using humor and perspective to guide them through what's a "little deal" versus a "big deal." Christine leads by example, never seeking recognition, but constantly advocating for her team and quietly stepping in to support others when they need it most. Her consistency, empathy, and behind-the-scenes advocacy make her someone students naturally look up to. She teaches not just through instruction, but through presence

APPLICATION NUMBER: 28

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Megan Dickey

Position: First Grade Teacher

School: Saints Simon & Jude

School District if applicable:

County of School: Chester County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Mairead Kelly

Your relationship to the Nominee: Mother of student in Teacher's class

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. Dickey's educational background reflects both academic excellence and a deep commitment to professional growth. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education with a minor in Spanish from Loyola University Maryland, graduating Summa Cum Laude. During her undergraduate studies, she spent a semester abroad in Spain and received top honors, including the Education Medal for achieving the highest GPA in the Education Department and the Excellence in Core Courses Award from the Department of Modern Languages. Building on this strong foundation, she completed a Master of Science in Education with a concentration in Administration and Supervision at Johns Hopkins University. Her credentials include a Pennsylvania Professional Certificate (K-6), Maryland Advanced Professional Certificate, and Maryland Administrator I/II Certification. She also successfully passed the School Leaders Licensure Assessment. With more than 11 years of teaching experience, she has taught first, second, and fourth grades, including eight years as a fourth-grade teacher in Baltimore County Public Schools, where she served on the School Improvement Team, Reading Action Team, Faculty Council, and as Grade Level Chair. She has taught at Saints Simon and Jude school in first grade for the past two years. Her career demonstrates

not only expertise in classroom instruction but also leadership and dedication to advancing educational excellence.

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

Mrs. Dickey consistently goes the extra mile to ensure her students feel supported, engaged, and excited about learning. She meets each child where they are academically, particularly in reading and math, tailoring her approach to individual needs. For example, she has helped my shy first grader come out of her shell on several occasions, creating a safe and welcoming environment that encourages confidence and participation. When my child has had tough days, Mrs. Dickey has shown compassion and patience, offering reassurance and strategies to help her refocus and succeed. Her teaching style is creative and dynamic. She incorporates hands-on tools—such as large foam dice for practicing math facts—to make learning fun and interactive. These activities not only reinforce key concepts but also keep students engaged and excited about the material. Her classroom is beautifully organized and thoughtfully designed, fostering a positive and stimulating environment for learning. Through her dedication, adaptability, and genuine care for her students, Mrs. Dickey exemplifies what it means to go above and beyond as an educator.

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.

While I do not work directly with Mrs. Dickey, I have seen the results of her collaboration with her first-grade partner, and it is truly impressive. Together, they create a unified and consistent experience across both first-grade classrooms. As a parent, I appreciate that the lesson plans and classroom activities are aligned, which ensures that all students receive the same high-quality instruction regardless of which class they are in. This level of coordination reflects a strong professional partnership and a shared commitment to excellence. Their teamwork provides a streamlined experience for families and demonstrates how collaboration among teachers can positively impact the classroom environment.

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

Mrs. Dickey exemplifies what it means to be a positive and consistent role model in the classroom. She uses positive reinforcement to encourage good behavior, creating an environment where students feel supported and motivated to succeed. Her calm and steady presence provides a sense of security and predictability for her students—qualities that are not always guaranteed in every classroom, making her approach truly refreshing. Organization is another area where Mrs. Dickey shines. She models preparedness and structure every day, and actively encourages her students to adopt these habits. By setting clear expectations and demonstrating the value of being organized, she equips her students with skills that will benefit them well beyond the classroom. In addition to her professional excellence, Mrs. Dickey is also a mother to children in the same school community. Her ability to balance her role as an educator and a parent serves as an inspiring example for students, showing them that dedication, hard work, and compassion can coexist. She demonstrates that working parents can thrive while making a meaningful impact on others—a lesson that resonates deeply with her students and their families.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 29

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Olga Zografakis

Position: Special Education Language Arts Teacher (6-8 Grades)

School: Radnor Middle School

School District if applicable: Radnor

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Timothy Bulman

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. Zografakis has been a certified special education teacher for 11 years (since 2014) at Radnor Middle School. She is certified in Elementary (K-6) and Special Education (K-12) and currently teaches Language Arts in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. She is a certified Reading Specialist with a proficiency in the following: Wilson Level I and II, Read 180, Project Read, Souday Reading Program, language Live, System 44, Making Meaning Program, Everyday Mathematics, Rewards, and Just Words. In 2019, she received a Differential Instruction Certificate from Harvard University. She has been a Dyslexia Practitioner since 2016 and a Structred Literacy Coach since 2023. She received a Ph.D. in Special Education from Northcentral University and is currently on sabbatical to complete her dissertation. From 2014-2023, Ms. Zografakis also planned and taught small group sessions as an Extended School Year Teacher. She served as a National Member of Council for Exceptional Children, Montgomery County Chapter #0388 in 2014 and is currently a Member of ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development).

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

On a personal level, my wife and I first met Ms. Zografakis when she became our son's Special Education Language Arts teacher in 6th grade. Our son, Dante, is on the autism spectrum and suffers from ADD/ADHD and other behavioral issues (Dante is currently in 12th grade at Radnor High School). When he was in 6th grade, Dante struggled tremendously with academics and was socially withdrawn and disengaged. Upon meeting Ms. Zografakis as his 6th grade teacher, we immediately noticed a vast improvement with Dante's attitude about learning and, more importantly, his personal self-esteem. Ms. Zografakis literally transformed his outlook and demeanor by employing very personal and positive teaching techniques. No prior educator in Dante's life (before or since) reached Dante the same way. At the same time, Ms. Zografakis pushed and challenged Dante more than any other teacher and achieved amazing results for our son. She helped Dante realize that he was intelligent by helping him manage his significant learning disabilities and finding his true worth. She instilled a confidence in him we had never seen before. To do so, she patiently went the extra mile to develop a trust with our son that was unprecedented. Ms. Zografakis continued as our son's Language Arts teacher in 7th grade and almost single handedly made Dante's middle school experience a success. Beginning in 8th grade and continuing to the present, Ms. Zografakis began to privately tutor Dante with his assignments and homework. Her expertise, compassion, and encouragement proved essential as Dante began high school and faced brand new social and academic challenges. Now as a senior, Dante is scheduled to graduate with his class next summer. We firmly believe Dante's outcome would have been different but not for Ms. Zografakis' unwavering support and efforts. In so many ways, we consider Ms. Zografakis to be so much more than a teacher, instead we see her as Dante's "life coach" and mentor.

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 8th grader at Radnor Middle School, Dante was invited to participate in an integrated program called "Soundings." The program challenges 8th graders to create a democratic learning community in which to explore student-selected themes that merge their adolescent concerns with state learning objectives and global issues. Soundings is not a special education class and its two teachers were not special education teachers. The program is very demanding both socially and academically. Not surprisingly, Dante initially struggled with the program. So much so that his two teachers advised us that Dante should be transferred out of the program as it was "beyond his abilities". We again turned to Ms. Zografakis for help. Although she was no longer one of his teachers, she remained his special education case manager and tutor.

She met with Dante's regular education teachers and provided tailored instruction to them so they could better reach Dante and motivate him. She also provided direct one-on-one tutoring to Dante. In an extraordinary transformation, Dante began to rise to the challenge and engage with his teachers and co-students. It was a gradual process, but it was very real and obvious and all thanks to Ms. Zografakis. To graduate from the program, all students are required to independently present a 45 minute oral presentation to the class and teachers. If you knew Dante, you would understand that this would be a very daunting and scary task. However, by the end of the year, Dante successfully gave his 45 minute presentation and his classmates applauded at the conclusion. Ms. Zografakis attended the presentation and took a video recording of it to share with us. To say we were proud of how far Dante came would be a gross understatement. And without Ms. Zografakis' extra efforts and expertise directly working with his general education teachers, none of this would have been possible.

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

Ms. Zografakis provides an excellent role model to her students by her actions and positive attitude. She often volunteers as a chaperone at school dances to provide extra support to her students with disabilities so they can participate with the general school population. She gives up her free time to ensure her students feel safe and welcome. She encourages her students to leave their comfort zone and push barriers. While always positive, Ms. Zografakis is no push over with her students and places high expectations upon them. If a student is not inclined to attend a dance or athletic event, Ms. Zografakis has an uncanny ability to positively cajole the student to change their mind. The end result is always positive for the student. Ms. Zografakis also recognizes that academic success and positive mental health are related to physical fitness. She herself is an avid fitness person and yoga instructor. She presents as an emotionally and physically fit individual, which is a terrific role model for the students. She is a coach on the middle school track team and actively "recruits" her special education students to participate in sports and to get off the couch and put down their screens. She inspires and motivates her students by how she handles herself and leads by example. To this day when she academically tutors our son she often uses some of the time to do physical fitness activities with him. In summary, Ms. Zografakis never asks a student to do something she would not do herself. I believe that is the true measure of a positive

role model and enthusiastically recommend Ms. Zografakis for this award and recognition.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 30

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Abigail Young

Position: 1st Grade Teacher

School: Ithan Elementary School

School District if applicable:

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Gulia Omene

Your relationship to the Nominee: None

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. Young taught my daughter's first grade class at Ithan Elementary School last year. As a parent, I do not know much about her extra certifications, but I am sure she or the principal of Ithan could give you great information!

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

Mrs. Young is an amazing, engaging teacher. Someone who's love of her craft is incredibly apparent. It is in all the little things she does, but I want to share one particular story to highlight this. When I chaperoned at the end of the year for a field trip to the play Aladin I was blown away with how much Mrs. Young gave to the students all day long. It would have been understandable for her to sit alone and get work done (or just plain zone out) on the bus, but instead she sat with one little boy named Andrew and engaged him the whole time. He just glowed while talking to her. In an age of increasingly distraction she gave him the ultimate gift of undivided attention. She then made him feel even more special by sharing his story of going to a play with his family and being pick out of the crowd to go onstage with the other kids. Again engaging

more of the kids, making Andrew feel special, and bringing them all together. I wish I could provide a snap shot of Andrew's face in that moment. He and his family were soon to move to Ohio, his life changing and thing not the easiest at the moment and here was a teacher pulling him back in. Bringing the whole class onto his team. Inclusion. And this was how she was at a time again, where she could be kind of turned off. The other parents were there to watch the kids. I was so moved by this experience.

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.

My daughter is in the gifted reading and math programs at Ithan elementary school. Mrs Young was instrumental in making sure that Ruona got the stimulation she needed to keep her love of learning from stagnating. During conferences, hearing the thought and effort Mrs yYoung put into making sure Ruona was challenged in math made my mom heart smile. And also the way she did it. She loved to almost "trick" the kids into a challenge. Then Ruona would come away so much more proud of the work she had done. Mrs Young also made sure Ruona had the right resources outside of her classroom as well.

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

She is a role model to her students with her passion. I don't know how to describe it better than to say she was made to be a teacher. I am so thankful my daughter can see a woman passionate about her job and going above and beyond her day to day duty. Grown up life is hard and I love the thought of these 6 and 7 years olds getting to see someone with light in their eyes that cares about each one individually and cares about being great at her profession. My daughter constantly talks about being a teacher like Mrs Young. I am filling this form out for her, and for that. Thank you.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 31

Application 1 of 3 for Keith Layman

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Keith Layman

Position: Social Studies Teacher/ Department Chair

School: Garnet Valley High School

School District if applicable: Garnet Valley School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Stephen Brandt

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. Layman has faithfully served the students and families within the Garnet Valley School District for nearly 25 years. He has taught all grade levels from 9-12, as well as all course levels from Academic to Advanced Placement. In addition, Mr. Layman serves as the Social Studies Department Chair, providing his leadership, wisdom, and experience to guide his colleagues. His efforts help shape various decisions on curriculum and instruction, while also providing a voice of reason and insight as a member of the GVHS Instructional Cabinet. Mr. Layman is a steady leader, who serves for the greater good of the community, never looking for validation or recognition. He truly serves to serve. He is the epitome of a professional educator, one that is a model for others to emulate. The Garnet Valley School District is beyond fortunate to have Mr. Layman as a member of our community and team.

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

Besides his immeasurable impact within the classroom, Mr. Layman goes above and beyond to impact the lives of students outside of the classroom. From serving as a wrestling coach early in his career to running a multitude of clubs and activities now, Mr. Layman continues to have a major influence in his students' lives. He currently serves as our Interact Club Sponsor, which is a subsidiary of the Rotary Club. At Garnet Valley High School, this club maintains approximately 300 student members, who focus on community service. Most notably, he and his Interact students coordinate our bi-annual event called "Dinner and a Show," which is for senior citizens in our community to attend a brunch and the matinee showing of our fall and spring musicals. This event tends to engage over 100 senior citizens from our community. There is no better form of civic engagement, as the event brings together today's youth with our community's most senioreed residents. In addition to this, Mr. Layman has served as our Student Council Sponsor, Mock Trial Advisor, Speech and Debate Advisor, and a Class Sponsor. Without a doubt, Mr. Layman continues to positively impact his students 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.

Mr. Layman continues to serve as a leader within our building as well as across the district. Most notably, our district has embarked on a major initiative to prioritize a peer coaching model and the development of an instructional guide to instruction and pedagogy for best practices. This guidebook has been commonly referred to as the GV Playbook. Within this work, Mr. Layman has played a key leadership role in the development and implementation of this GV Playbook, serving on the district initiative team that helped bring the Playbook and classroom visits to life. Through his vision and hard work, he helped create a shared framework that supports consistent, high-quality instruction across classrooms. He continues to lead by example—opening his own classroom for colleagues to visit, reflect, and learn together. This work is critical across our district, as it aims to unite our educational practices from K-12 and building more consistency of the best instructional practices across classrooms at all levels. Most importantly, it has opened dialogue and collaboration amongst educators across buildings and levels, championing our GV Playbook and strengthening collaboration across our school and district educators. We are truly operating as a K-12 district and Mr. Layman is playing a critical role in this work.

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

Keith leads by example. He doesn't just talk about best practices—he lives them. By opening his classroom to peers, championing the GV Playbook, and engaging in district initiatives, he shows what true collaboration looks like. He encourages others to take risks, reflect on their teaching, and grow together as a community of learners. Keith is a role model because of his kindness, humility, and dedication. He treats everyone with respect, listens deeply, and celebrates the strengths of others. His leadership is grounded in relationships, and he constantly reminds those around him that great teaching starts with great people.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 32

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Trish Lydon

Position: Kindergarten Teacher

School: Coebourn Elementary

School District if applicable: Penn Delco School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Katie Cardwell

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. Lydon has been teaching Kindergarten for over 15 years (not sure of the exact number). She is the leader of the Environmental Club, the creator of Graden Fest, a community volunteer and helps with Girls on the Run after school.

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

I want you to think of Miss Honey from the story "Matilda" and that is Trish Lydon. She comes to school each day with a positive attitude and smile. Trish is the type of person who always has a cheerful disposition with her students even when it can be a hectic day. Last year, unfortunately Trish's mother passed away, however this did not impact her work. She still showed up for each and every student. Cheering on their accomplishments each step of the way. Trish is the type of teacher that can remain cool, calm and collected which is very important in the Kindergarten world. She curates lessons based on student needs and interests. I have seen her been "blown away" by a student when they do something great. Trish pretends to be pushed out of the way like a hurricane to show how amazed she is of her students. Ms. Lydon never talks down to

her students, but instead offers a listening ear and a caring heart. Her classroom is truly a loving family and I believe the students learn this through her amazing example 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.

When coming to work Trish is the person who automatically makes anyone feel included in the school. She will introduce herself and take anyone under her wing. There have been many times where I have witnessed Ms. Lydon comforting those in need while still going through her own difficult times herself. Trish creates a positive work atmosphere with her kind heart and silly sense of humor. She is the type of person that can really turn a day around. Ms. Lydon often organizes events for students and staff to come together and get to know their peers. This has been done in her well-known event called "Garden Fest". On this day students from K-5 go out to our garden to plant, learn about the environment, participate in yoga and a community outreach event. This has been important because although technology is very important, she can lead the way in showing students that there can be fields of interest besides a phone or tablet. She makes learning fun and easy for all involved.

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

Ms. Lydon is THE kindergarten teacher you want to have a child go to. She truly shows patience, compassion, understanding and support for all of her students. Trish treats all of her students with amazing respect. By the end of the year, she had shaped these young students into little learners (Learning with Lydon). Ms. Lydon embodies grace and courage throughout her teaching, even when life has shown her difficult times. Ms. Lydon is not one to look for attention or praise, however I really think this wonderful woman deserves it. I admire her each and everyday with her work, thoughtfulness and inspiration.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 33

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Katelynn Scott

Position: Library Media Specialist

School: Alfred G. Waters Middle School

School District if applicable: Appoquinimink School District

County of School: New Castle County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Melissa Grieshofer

Your relationship to the Nominee: Coworker, taught my children

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. Scott is in her 19th year of teaching and continues to bring enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication to her students every day. Before joining the Delaware education community, she taught in Kansas, where she began her career and developed a strong foundation in literacy instruction. She spent eight years teaching middle school English Language Arts, helping students grow as readers, writers, and critical thinkers before transitioning into her current role as a school librarian. Mrs. Scott holds a Bachelor's degree in English Language Arts Education from MidAmerica Nazarene University and a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from Drexel University, reflecting her deep commitment to lifelong learning and the power of education. In addition to managing the library and promoting a love of reading, Mrs. Scott serves as the school's 1:1 iPad device coordinator, ensuring that technology is effectively integrated into the classroom. She also leads several after-school clubs, providing students with engaging opportunities to explore their interests beyond the school day. Her dedication, leadership, and passion for both literacy and technology make her an invaluable member of the school community.

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

Mrs. Scott is truly the heart of the library—if not the entire school. Her warmth, energy, and genuine care for students make the library a welcoming place where every child feels seen and valued. She is a tireless champion for every student, believing deeply in their potential and using her library space as far more than just a room filled with books. Under her leadership, the library has become a vibrant hub for creativity, curiosity, and community—a place where ideas are shared, friendships are built, and a lifelong love of reading and learning takes root. Throughout the school year, Mrs. Scott organizes and leads several engaging book clubs at each grade level (6–8). These are not mandatory activities but opportunities that students eagerly choose to join, often giving up their lunchtime just to participate. Each club is thoughtfully designed to spark meaningful discussion, encourage critical thinking, and expose students to new genres and perspectives they might not have explored otherwise. Mrs. Scott selects diverse and thought-provoking titles, creating an inclusive environment where every voice is heard and respected. On a personal note, my own daughter participated in Mrs. Scott's book clubs all three years she attended the school, and those experiences left a lasting impression. Through Mrs. Scott's gentle encouragement and enthusiasm, she discovered new types of texts, broadened her interests, and developed greater confidence as a reader and thinker. I am deeply grateful for the care, creativity, and dedication Mrs. Scott brings to her work each day—she has made a lasting impact not only on my child, but on countless students who have had the privilege of learning from 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. Scott is an integral part of her school staff, playing a vital role in both leadership and instructional collaboration. She serves on the Leadership Team, where she contributes valuable insights that help guide school-wide goals, initiatives, and decision-making. As the Related Arts team leader, she fosters a spirit of collaboration and creativity among her colleagues, ensuring that students experience a well-rounded education that integrates the arts, literacy, and technology. Mrs. Scott can often be found working hand-in-hand with classroom teachers, joining them during planning sessions to design engaging, standards-based lessons that connect seamlessly with core curriculum areas. Her expertise in research, literacy, and digital learning makes her a go-to resource for teachers seeking to enrich their instruction. She doesn't just stay behind

the scenes—she actively co-teaches lessons, modeling effective strategies, guiding students through inquiry-based projects, and demonstrating how the library can support learning across every subject area. Through her collaboration, she helps teachers bring lessons to life and empowers students to become enthusiastic, independent learners.

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

Mrs. Scott is a role model in many ways, both inside and outside the classroom. She truly embodies her school's core values—Empower, Achieve, Lead—by living them out through her daily actions, words, and interactions with students and staff. She empowers students to be confident in who they are, encourages them to achieve their goals through perseverance and curiosity, and leads by example with integrity, creativity, and kindness. One of the most beloved things about Mrs. Scott is her willingness to embrace her unique quirkiness and share it proudly with others. Her love for the color pink has become a fun and well-known trademark around the school. Each year, she invites students to "out pink" her, turning Valentine's Day—and sometimes October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month—into a joyful celebration of color, community, and school spirit. Beyond her playful personality, Mrs. Scott's impact runs deep. Through the many clubs and activities she sponsors, she creates an inclusive environment where all students feel welcome, valued, and encouraged to explore their passions. Her library is more than just a place for books—it's a safe, vibrant space where creativity thrives and individuality is celebrated. Mrs. Scott not only shares her love of learning and literature but also models self-acceptance and the importance of honoring each person's unique gifts. Her authenticity, warmth, and dedication inspire students to lead with confidence and to celebrate what makes them special.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 34

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Robert King

Position: teacher

School: Radnor High School

School District if applicable: Radnor Township School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Joseph MacNamara

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.**

Robert King - Graduate of Dickinson College in History and Cabrini College for a master's in education. Rob has been teaching for 30 years as a social studies teacher at the high school level. He is certified in Social Studies 7-12 and Italian PK-12.

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

Mr. King demonstrates what it means to go above and beyond. Long after the final bell rings, you can still find him in his classroom, helping students revise essays, preparing hands-on projects, or simply listening to those who need a supportive adult in their corner. His door is always open, and his presence has become a steady source of encouragement for countless students. Mr. King's impact reaches far beyond academics and activities. Students regularly share that he is someone they trust, an adult who sees them, supports them, and challenges them to be their best. Whether he's celebrating their achievements or helping them navigate difficult moments, his compassion has made RHS feel more like a home. Colleagues describe him as humble and steady. He never seeks recognition, but his work speaks for itself: inspiring students, strengthening

the school community, and reminding everyone of the profound influence a single educator can have. Radnor High School is a better place because of Mr. King. And for the students who have been lucky enough to learn from him, his impact will resonate long after they leave the building.

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 a social studies perspective, it's important to recognize the impact individuals can have on a larger community and Mr. King models this every day. He serves on as many district committees as he can because he is deeply committed to doing right by kids. His goal is always to help colleagues understand the foundations and purposes of these committees so that, together, they can promote strong, meaningful learning experiences for all students.

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

Mr. King serves as a daily role model for her students through his integrity, compassion, and dedication to growth. He doesn't just teach leadership, he models it. When his students fall short in accomplishing a goal for a project, Mr. King guides them in reflecting on what went wrong, encouraged them to persevere, and even worked alongside them during their second attempt. The project ultimately surpassed its goal, and his students learned that resilience and teamwork can turn setbacks into success. In the classroom, Mr. King leads by example through his positivity and professionalism. He greets every student by name, celebrates small victories, and treats mistakes as opportunities to learn. Through his actions, Mr. King inspires his students to hold themselves to the same high standard.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 35

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Renee Carey

Position: Science 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: Kirk McGrotty

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.**

Renee Carey has been teaching for fifteen years; first in a Philadelphia charter school, then Upper Darby High School, and presently at Interboro High School. She is certified to teach high school Biology, with a degree from West Chester University. Renee has taught Biology at all levels, from basic and co-taught to honors as well as ELL classes. She also teaches Allied Health (a course that prepares students for careers in the health professions such as nursing and medical techs), and has created and piloted a new Educator Rising class that started this year. She also attended Interboro; as her former teacher and coach, and as a colleague in the science department (Chemistry), I can attest to the passion she has for teaching that transfers to the positive learning atmosphere she incorporates to stimulate learning in her students.

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

Renee's creativity in developing lessons is impressive; her ability to mold her approach to adjust to a myriad of learning styles never ceases to impress. Whether it is creating alternative approaches to labs and activities, adjusting the classroom environment, or

creating a more useful physical space, Renee will do what is needed to ensure success in her students. Her artistic creativity shines in what her students produce, from climate change posters to adjusting the environment to ensure wildebeest survival in Biology to creating physical three-dimensional models of the ultimate classroom in the Educator Rising class. Her culminating project in Biology, the development of an imaginary species, complete with adaptations to fit its specific environment and a full workup of its niche, is a student favorite; it highlights numerous intelligences that are applicable for assessment. She is a CPR instructor, so in Allied Health her students all receive training and certification. Renee is also deeply involved in school life. Her students often see her supporting them at sporting events, plays, school dances, and Hi-Q matches. This year, she took on the role of freshman class advisor, leading students in a variety of school activities including the homecoming float and dance as well as fundraisers and food drives. She also became the advisor for the Educators Rising club, where she mentors students interested in pursuing careers in education after high school. They have shadowed teachers at every grade level and have visited with professional educators outside of our district to learn about the profession from many angles. Additionally, the class created a support system for our teachers, including a delicious and greatly appreciated 'make your own candy apple' faculty meeting after school as well as a book drive for our elementary school buildings. She arrives early and works late, constantly developing curriculum and activities that will be both meaningful and educational to her students. Before school she is setting up the day's lesson; after school she is either grading, creating materials for what comes next, or collaborating with peers to refine her ideas. She is the epitome of '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.

For the past two years, Renee has been collaborating with the Biology team in a complete overhaul of the curriculum to assure alignment with the new NGSS standards. This involved an in-depth dive into multiple platforms with numerous metrics for analysis; once identified, the inclusion of materials and the day-to-day application into lessons has been an immense task. Virtually every day necessitates impromptu meetings with colleagues to compare notes on what works best, what needs editing, and what is in need of deep revision, discussions I have personally witnessed numerous times. Renee takes it upon herself to proactively troubleshoots activities and assignments, making thoughtful modifications to support student success. She consistently shares the materials she creates and offers valuable insights that strengthen the development of each new unit. Students were having difficulty with DNA; Renee came up with

manipulatives that mirrored the transcription/translation process to make higher order concepts more concrete. Her creativity and insights are invaluable in adapting to student needs. Concurrent to her work in Biology, she collaborated with our workforce coordinators to develop and implement an entirely new course, one specifically designed for students interested in becoming educators: our new EdRising class. She is implementing a dynamic introduction to teaching that has her students truly excited to learn about the art of teaching (of which Renee is eminently qualified to convey). The amazing three-dimensional representations of what the students created as their ideal classroom is currently on display, and it rivals work created by the art department. She created pathways for observation and interaction with multiple grade levels; and, to increase perspective, individuals outside the district. Finally, in Allied Health, to bring a sense of reality, she implemented a series of case studies for students to analyze, developing their analytical skills and projecting paths of treatment. Renee is a colleague who keeps to the utmost of professional standards, for herself and for her students.

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

Students in Renee's classes, either currently enrolled or looking back to the previous year, agree on four emergent themes. First, Renee is dedicated to student success. She is tireless in her pursuit of student mastery. When needed, the extra time she affords students, either in small groups or one-on-one, is not only appreciated but truly admired. She gives of herself to make sure no one is left behind and all are learning. Numerous students express sincere gratitude that she truly listens to their concerns and is receptive to patiently answering their questions and re-explaining material. Many mentioned that they felt comfortable asking questions and never felt that they were made to feel marginalized for doing so. Second, Renee is extremely adaptable. She will mold projects to best reflect a student's strengths to give them a greater chance of success; she will also encourage development of weaker areas, fostering a community of growth. Her lessons are tiered and multifaceted to allow for maximum exploration of talents, exemplified in the culminating project where an animal and habitat are created. Third, Renee is responsible. She is planned weeks in advance; she grades quickly and equitably. She enters every class with a lesson fully planned with enough nuance to adjust to class climate on the fly. There is never a 'free' day where nothing is prepared; her professionalism and thorough, thoughtful activities are seen and respected. The fourth and final common theme is Renee's understanding persona. She can diffuse a

situation and create stability; she works with students in crisis instead of dismissing their issues. She is a gifted listener, able to hear what a student needs even when they don't actually say it. Students were greatly appreciative of her empathy and ability to make them feel safe and valued. The overarching conclusion is that Renee is a role model because students overwhelmingly agree that, to her core, she cares about them, respects them, and strives to do her absolute best for them. Teenagers can see right through a fake veneer; Renee creates a positive atmosphere where students feel safe, supported, and understood. She is a fantastic teacher.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 36

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Karen M Patterson

Position: Special Education teacher

School: Odyssey Charter Schoo

School District if applicable: Odyssey Charter

County of School: New Castle County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Ronald Patterson

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.**

Karen has been teaching for 27 years. She holds two Master's Degrees From Wilmington University. She is certified in Elementary Education, Special Education, and social Studies. This year she was named Odyssey Teacher of the year for the high school. She has also received Walmart Teacher of the Year twice and the Anne Marie Fahey Award for Delaware State Mentor of the year.

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

Karen has such a giving heart. Besides her job she goes above and beyond by coaching color guard and boys volleyball and is the class advisor for the jr. class. She always makes sure that every student has what they need to be successful, whether its a notebook or pencils or a snack to get through the day. She even bought the color guard new uniforms out of pocket so that they could look uniform during parades.

- 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.**

Karen every year gives up part of her summer to go to Camp Odyssey to and work with incoming freshman on team building and other necessary things they will need to be successful in high school. She works tirelessly to create and modify lessons for students with disabilities so that they can achieve academic excellence. She co-plans each week with teachers on her team and when teachers notice students struggling she takes them for small group and works with them one on one.

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

Karen has been working with one student who this year is a senior. In tenth grade he was all but written off as a problem. For three years Karen has worked with him to get him on track and this year in the first marking period he received straight A's. Last year she worked with a student who was finally diagnosed in 11th grade with Dyslexia and taught him to read and write without parameters. The student graduated and was accepted to college.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 37

Application 1 of 11 for Chassidy King

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Chassidy King

Position: Real Estate Teacher, 10-12

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable: William Penn School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Justin Wilson

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.**

Started this year of I think in Penn Wood High School, she teaches 10-12 grade, she is a real estate teacher, and has a real estate license.

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

The Story, The Ugly House That Sold Fast, my teacher once broke down a real-life case of a house that sat on the market for a while. Most people would ignore ugly houses, but one investor saw potential in them. That example explains her classroom, and she still decides to teach it.

- 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 brought examples of speakers who really made a big for themselves and worked alongside them to really explain how to successfully get into real estate. It's like a mentor bond and how the real world would help the future generations.

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

APPLICATION NUMBER: 38

Application 2 of 11 for Chassidy King

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Chassidy King

Position: Teacher

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable: William Penn School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Ricky M

Your relationship to the Nominee: She is my 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.**

I do not know.

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

She has helped me with work multiple times, during times where she should have been eating or using her own personal time for herself.

- 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 has worked with the teacher next door to stop trouble from happening and I've seen her help other teachers with their errands.

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

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

She give real world experience and examples to open our eyes up to more than just what we are shown on a screen.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 39

Application 3 of 11 for chassidy king

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: chassidy king

Position: Teacher

School: Penn wood high school green Ave campus

School District if applicable: William penn

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Ismael Keita

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.**

n/a

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

she cares about our class work and is a great 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.**

she encourages people to do theyre work and provides extra help

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

she encourages me to d my work everyday so i will be succuseful

APPLICATION NUMBER: 40

Application 4 of 11 for Chassidy King

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Chassidy King

Position: Teacher

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable:

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Dymond Coleman

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.**

I don't know all that i just know shes my introduction to real estate teacher, and shes amazing.m

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

because i was told to nominnate 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.**

idk

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

idk

APPLICATION NUMBER: 41

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Enissa Borine

Position: 1st grade teacher

School: Wayne Elementary School

School District if applicable: radnor school district

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Yanan Yang

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. Borine currently teaches first grade. As a parent, I've seen firsthand how her educational background and expertise translate into a caring, effective, and inspiring classroom environment.

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

My child was struggling with confidence in speaking. Ms. Borine encouraged her for the daily morning meeting. Because of that attention, my child not only improved academically but began looking forward to speaking in public more confidently.

- 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. Borine also supports excellence beyond the classroom by organizing a parent book club focused on how children learn. Through these sessions, they shared strategies like small-group learning and encouraging mistakes as part of growth. This helped parents

better understand the school's approach and apply the same supportive practices at home, strengthening the overall learning community.

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

Ms. Borine serves as a strong role model by demonstrating curiosity, respect, and resilience each day. They encourage students to embrace challenges, celebrate mistakes, and support one another—values they consistently model through their words and actions.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 42

Application 5 of 11 for Chassidy King

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Chassidy King

Position: Staff

School: Penn wood high school

School District if applicable:

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Alhaji

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 been teaching her current school for two years, and teaches student from 10 to 12 grade.

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

She always gives us enough time to finish our work, and she never moves on until she's sure we all understand. She goes around the room, explaining each step clearly so no one gets left behind.

- 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 works with other teachers to plan fun activities for us, like group games and creative challenges, so learning feels exciting and not boring.

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

She is a role model because she shows patience, kindness, and dedication every day. For example, even when she is busy, she takes the time to listen to students' problems and guide them.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 43

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Mark Monaghan

Position: Social Studies Teacher

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable: William Penn School District.

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Asha Kouyateh

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.**

16 years. BA: Psychology MS: Instructional Leadership MBA: Urban Land Studies Certified in Social Studies Certified in ELA Certified in Special Education

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

This teacher gone above and beyond by making the past feel real and meaningful for his students. Instead of just teaching dates and facts, he tells stories that connect historical events to real people and real struggles, helping students truly understand why history matters.

- 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.**

He work along with Miss King, and they make sure every students understand the lesson.

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

He is a strong role model because he leads by example and show his students what it means to be thoughtful, respectful and engaged citizens. In class, he encourages open discussion and teaches students how to disagree respectfully, reminding them that understanding different perspectives is a key part of history.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 44

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: lainie

Position: hagerty

School: penn wood high school

School District if applicable:

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: angelina

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.**

good teavher

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

good 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.**

good teacher

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

good teacher

APPLICATION NUMBER: 45

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: rapp

Position: 10th grad history teacher

School: Penn wood high

School District if applicable: William Penn

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: salihah Gary

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.**
- 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: 46

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Suzanne Stadnicki

Position: French 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: Alex Paul

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.**

Suzanne is an exceptional educator with over 20 years of teaching experience. She has taught all levels of French and has also served as an ELL instructor at the University of Pennsylvania. Most recently, she played a pivotal role in earning the French program recognition as a French Center of Excellence. In addition, she has collaborated closely with the College Board on AP French initiatives, creating professional development videos that support and elevate teachers across the country. Suzanne's dedication, expertise, and leadership make her an outstanding candidate for this award.

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

Suzanne consistently goes above and beyond for her students in countless ways. She is always willing to provide extra support by meeting with students after school to help them strengthen their French skills and organizing the bi-yearly exchange to France as well as the trip to Quebec. These immersive experiences offer students invaluable, authentic opportunities to use their French in real-world settings. During these trips, Suzanne supports students not only academically but also emotionally and socially,

guiding them through challenges ranging from homesickness to even lost passports. Beyond the classroom, Suzanne enriches the school environment by showcasing student work throughout the hallways and contributing her creativity to building school spirit. She is a key organizer of the annual winter hallway decorations, a tradition that has now continued for three years. Her efforts bring joy, foster community, and create a warm, uplifting atmosphere during an often stressful time of 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.

Suzanne has been a steady source of support for me. As my mentor, she helped me acclimate to the school and was always available for feedback, guidance, and idea-sharing. When our school transitioned to Schoology, Suzanne spent countless hours learning the platform, developing effective course pages, and helping train our staff to use it successfully. She ran countless trainings, so that teachers would be prepared to make the switch mid-year from google classroom to schoology. She has also collaborated closely with me to develop new rubrics that strengthen our department's feedback practices and ensure we stay aligned with current trends in education. I deeply admire Suzanne as a dedicated teacher who is continually improving her craft and always putting students first.

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

Suzanne is a positive light in our school community and is actively involved in numerous clubs, including French Club, Interact, and Activities Council. She previously supported our school's Mini-THON as well. Through her involvement, she models for students the value of engagement, passion, and leadership. Suzanne is both a dedicated educator and a talented linguist who consistently adapts to meet students' learning needs while also reminding them of the importance of balancing self-care with their commitment to French. She promotes meaningful French usage by building strong connections with students and incorporating activities that support well-being, such as creating decorations and even leading yoga sessions.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 47

Application 6 of 11 for Chassidy King

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Chassidy King

Position: Marketing Teacher

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable: William penn

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: milan brown

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.**

Miss King has been teaching for 7 years. Prior to her coming to Penn Wood High School she taught at Chester High School. She currently is my Marketing Tacher. She is an amazing teacher that really cares and invest in her students. She already was recongized by Citdel Bank for Teacher of the Year. She created a free hygiene closet at Chester High School which got her recongized. She literally what it means to be a teacher.

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

Miss King makes sure she goes out her way to make sure students are caught up in her class and understanding everything she teaches.

- 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 King shares the best resources and best practices

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

APPLICATION NUMBER: 48

Application 1 of 4 for Danielle Heller

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Danielle Heller

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: Brenda Millette

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.**

Danielle Heller has been a first grade teacher at Media Elementary School for the past 3 years, and worked at Glenwood Elementary before that. She has impressed me as a young educator.

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

Danielle Heller is a wonderful educator who greets her students with a welcoming smile and encouraging words as they enter her class, Danielle maintains a positive, cheerful, wise, helpful demeanor throughout the school day. Her attendance is exemplary and she creates a wonderful, meaningful learning experience daily for a group of busy, young students with a range of abilities and needs. She works tirelessly with her teammates and school specialists to create a safe and fun place 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.**

Danielle and I (school reading specialist) have worked side by side teaching systematic, explicit phonics to a large group of struggling first graders to ensure they have what they need to succeed in early reading skills. Danielle used exemplary Science of Reading Techniques and multi-sensory instruction to enhance the growth of reading and spelling skills. Students were engaged and clearly made progress based on assessments and progress monitoring and went on to be stronger readers who enjoyed language arts. Danielle puts in extra hours to research the current new language arts program being used in our district. She strives to be familiar with the resources and shares them with her teaching team. She diligently corresponds with parents sharing information that will support student learning to foster a positive home/school connection. Danielle designs art projects to enhance and align with learning and give opportunities to use fine motor skills and infuse creativity into a long school day. She shares these ideas with her team and the first grade hallway and classrooms are a joyous place of art and beauty. Ms. Heller differentiates instruction to ensure students of all abilities are meeting their learning goals. Her students range from gifted, to in need of significant support.

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

I was in Ms. Heller's classroom during a lock down drill that lasted 15 minutes. She was calm, cool and collected keeping students feeling safe and secure. There was a period of time when a student had difficulty remaining silent and was being inappropriately loud and silly. Danielle calmly said to the child, "Look at my face. Am I smiling and laughing along with you? Or am I being respectful, quiet and calm along with everyone else?" The child was able to be appropriate the rest of the lock down, and all the students were witness to this calm, kind, important moment. During the school morning announcements a child who often has tantrums was beginning to loudly whine when a different child won a prize from the school office. Ms. Heller calmly and kindly said, "We must learn to be happy for others and support them when they win. Just like if you won something you would want us to be happy for you. This is an opportunity for you to turn your day around and learn from it." Other kind, calm learning nuggets from Ms. Heller when a student was interrupting learning, include "I'm in the middle of teaching; please raise your hand," and "Let's try again," then whispering, "Very good." I am honestly impressed with her poise and eloquence as she maintains a truly exceptional learning environment, and feel I learn from her every time I am in the room.

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

In the morning as students enter the building I see a steady flow of former students coming to greet her before they go on to their current classroom. This is a testimonial to how she is able to build strong bonds with students.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 49

Application 2 of 4 for Danielle Heller

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Danielle Heller

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: Maureen Naylor

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.**

Danielle is a former student of the Rose Tree Media School District and earned her bachelor's degree from West Chester University. As a long-term substitute, she impressed both her colleagues and the administration, ultimately earning a full-time contract. She has now been teaching first grade for three years at Media Elementary School.

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

Danielle has been an active member of our school's Mentor Program for several years. She dedicates time to building strong, supportive relationships with students, getting to know them personally and offering consistent one-on-one encouragement.

- 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.**

Although Ms. Heller is a relatively new teacher, she has already taken on a leadership role within her team. Her strong technology skills enhance the curriculum, and she regularly shares the instructional materials she creates with her colleagues. Danielle independently coordinates and shares the weekly scope and sequence with the MTSS teacher, Reading Specialist, and ELS teacher. This collaboration ensures that students receive support aligned with their classroom learning.

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

Danielle creates a classroom environment grounded in respect and active engagement. She knows her students well—their needs, strengths, and interests—and works to ensure every child feels included. Students who benefit from movement or brain breaks are always on her radar, and rather than drawing attention to these needs, Danielle naturally adjusts her instruction to accommodate them. Her flexibility is evident as she balances curriculum expectations with the social and behavioral needs of her students.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 50

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Jena Foley

Position: teacher

School: Loomis Elementary School

School District if applicable: Marple Newtown SD

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Jaime Smyth

Your relationship to the Nominee: Principal/ 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 approximately 15 years, working with students from kindergarten through fifth grade depending on the year. She holds an elementary education certification with an endorsement in social-emotional and behavioral wellness, and she currently teaches math to the entire fifth grade population at Loomis Elementary School. In addition to her classroom responsibilities, Mrs. Foley serves on several district-level committees, providing support and guidance to teachers across the district. We deeply value her work and trust her professional judgment.

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

When you first walk into Jena Foley's classroom, you might think the teacher is missing. Maybe it's because of her petite stature or the fact that many of her fifth graders tower over her. But the real reason she's hard to spot is because she is always right beside her students—on the floor, next to a desk, or seated shoulder-to-shoulder with a child who needs her. Mrs. Foley adores her students and lovingly calls them "my kids." And we're not talking about a class of 25—she pours that love into all 100 of her fifth graders as if

each one belongs to her. Mrs. Foley often invites me, her principal, into her classroom—not for herself, but to shine a positive light on a student or to show off something the kids created. But my favorite moments are when she performs one of her math songs. She grabs her microphone, cues up lyrics she wrote herself, and begins to sing... about math! Each song is set to whatever melody her students currently love. This year, her class is in their Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce Era, so of course the duo appears on her SmartBoard daily, team-teaching with Mrs. Foley and reminding students to "look for the mistake." Many teachers tense up when a principal visits, but Mrs. Foley welcomes it. She celebrates mistakes because she sees them as opportunities to grow. She knows each child personally and weaves their interests directly into her lessons, keeping them fully engaged. Several students who once disliked math now say it's their favorite part of the day. Mrs. Foley can always find something positive in every child. When a student struggles, she adjusts her approach until the child succeeds independently. Recently, she even requested to keep a student in her math class for small-group support rather than sending the child to a separate setting—showing her deep commitment to meeting students where they are. The confidence that student now carries into math speaks volumes. She is a rare find—an exceptionally dedicated teacher whose impact is felt by every child she meets. Loomis is a better place because of 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.

Jena Foley is profoundly student- and data-driven. You would think this would be a given in education, but not every teacher is fully dedicated to ensuring that every student succeeds. Mrs. Foley not only wants her students to thrive, she plans, and then over-plans, to create engaging, meaningful, and targeted lessons at each child's level. She meets students exactly where they are and pulls them forward with purpose and care. Because she differentiates instruction so effectively, she loves to team-teach with both the learning support and gifted support teachers—a challenging task she manages with skill and grace. Mrs. Foley is also a vital member of the fifth-grade team. Her teammates adore her upbeat personality and boundless energy. When she's spotted in the hallway, she is always smiling, moving with a pep in her step, and making everyone feel genuinely happy to see her. She is the first to lend a hand—whether supporting colleagues, running the Math 24 Club, or quietly helping a child in a younger grade who is struggling emotionally. She treats assistants, students, and families with kindness, dignity, and respect. In true Mrs. Foley fashion, she balances professionalism with humor—she's a playful prankster, a published author, and a wonderful mother. I often joke with staff that every school needs a "Mrs. Foley," and teachers feel the same.

When they are unsure about something, they laugh and say, "We'll just ask Jena. She probably already did it." And the truth is, she probably has! Her knowledge, initiative, and willingness to help make her a go-to resource for the entire building. I often wish I could clone her and place a "Mrs. Foley" in every grade. Every child deserves a champion who cares deeply about their education, struggles, and successes. And every teacher deserves a teammate as dedicated, supportive, and talented as she is. Not many educators can teach any grade level and still be phenomenal but Mrs. Foley can, and she proves it every single day.

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

Mrs. Foley is an extraordinary role model for her students and for our entire staff. She consistently sees the best in every child, and students quickly notice this. Because she models kindness, empathy, and a belief in each person's potential, her students begin to mirror those traits. They learn to look for the good in others, offer grace, and give their peers the benefit of the doubt. Her influence extends far beyond academics; she shapes the kind of people her students are becoming. As a Title I school, our students come from a wide mix of backgrounds, with nearly one-third living at or below the poverty line. Mrs. Foley ensures that every child and their family is treated with dignity. She quietly makes sure students have what they need to participate fully in field trips, projects, and graduation activities so no child feels "less than" or left out. She teaches her students, by example, what inclusion truly looks like. Mrs. Foley creates a classroom family where every child is accepted for who they are and encouraged to be themselves. Students learn what they live, and in her room they live kindness, respect, and belonging. One example that speaks volumes about her character involves a student who arrived from another country and spoke no English. While this is not uncommon at Loomis, Mrs. Foley was increasingly concerned about the student's lack of meaningful progress. She approached me and asked if her own mother, an experienced educator, could come in to tutor the child for free so the student could gain confidence in English before entering middle school. We do not have interventionists in our district so this was a wonderful volunteer opportunity that I was able to help get approved to benefit the student. When Mrs. Foley asks something like this, the answer is always yes, not only because her heart is in the right place, but because you know she has been losing sleep worrying about the child. Soon, students in her class began volunteering to help their new peer with flashcards and cheering for every small victory. She did not just

support this child herself; she inspired her whole class to do the same. Mrs. Foley also models empathy and real-world responsibility through creative teaching. Each year, she partners with a local pet shelter and challenges students to solve real-life problems related to caring for animals. Students calculate the financial needs of a designated shelter pet: food, medical care, supplies, and work together to propose solutions. It is math, compassion, and community service seamlessly woven together. Her students learn that numbers matter, but people and animals matter even more. To watch Mrs. Foley teach and interact with her students is truly magical. She embodies every quality we hope our children will grow up to have: kindness, persistence, empathy, humor, and a deep commitment to helping others. Just ask anyone who has ever had the privilege of watching her in action.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 51
Application 7 of 11 for Chassidy King

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Chassidy King

Position: Teacher

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable:

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Amelia King

Your relationship to the Nominee: Daughter

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.**

number of years teaching:7 yearsgrade level 10th - 12thsubject: Marketing/financial literacy/ real estatecertifications received, and/or achievements related to education. Certified Marketing teacher

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

My daughter is not your ordinary teacher. She goes far beyond what most teachers do. While working at Chester High School, she noticed that many students were in need of hygiene products, so she created the Clipper Closet—a free hygiene closet available to everyone in the school. She has even driven students to college when they lacked family support. She has helped students get into various programs geared toward their career goals, and she has brought in guest speakers from different industries so students could learn about real-world careers, roles, and responsibilities. She even applied for the WHY-PBS media lab grant, where her current school has a free media lab. In the lab it

is teaching students about journalism and communication. She is truly invested in 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.

Chassidy is always willing to lend a hand to anyone. When she sees someone struggling, she doesn't hesitate to step in and help. Her classroom is located on a floor with only two rooms—hers and the health teacher, Ms. M. As a second-year teacher, Ms. M sometimes struggles with classroom management, and Chassidy frequently stops in to help her regain control of the class. Even students she has never taught seek her out to confide in her.

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

Chassidy has received letters of gratitude from her students, who appreciate the way she consistently goes above and beyond the duties of a teacher. She pushes them past the limits they believe they are capable of and meets them exactly where they are. She takes the time to understand her students and makes her lessons relatable and current. Regardless of their home or environmental challenges, she helps them see that they don't have to become a product of their circumstances. She teaches them the true meaning of breaking generational curses. Because of her guidance, her students go on to secure jobs, trades, college opportunities—you name it.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 52

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Freda Anderson

Position: 9th, 10th, History

School: Academy at Palumbo

School District if applicable: School District of Philadelphia

County of School: Philadelphia County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Charles McGeehan

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.**

10 years of teaching in The SDP: 6 at The U School, 4 at Academy at Palumbo

Undergrad in Secondary English Education from Temple University

Graduate in Transformative Education and Social Change from West Chester University

Lindback Award Winner, 2019

Curriculum Design for OER Project 2022-2024

Curriculum Design for SDP History Department 2023-2025

Prentiss-Charney Zinn Fellowship 2024-2026

Consultant Curriculum Design Research Teacher for Digital Promise 2022-2025

My Climate Story Project Teacher 2022-2023

Philadelphia STEM Education for Sustainability Teacher Fellow 2017-2023

Teacher's Institute of Philadelphia (TIP) Fellow 2018, 2022

National Liberty Museum Teacher as Hero Award 2019

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

This teacher started the first ever Gay Straight Alliance at The U School.

This teacher worked with students to plan and host a Living with Lead Safely town hall event in the school community neighborhood.

This teacher worked with high school students to put on an all years school reunion for Ferguson Elementary alumni, which was shut down due to budget cuts in 2013.

This teacher led a PD on best practices for supporting student survivors of sexual abuse.

This teacher founded the Queer Little Library for students at both schools.

This teacher took students to canvas and register people to vote in the school community at The U 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.

This teacher is a leader at her school. She has led several PDs for her colleagues both at her school, at the district, and at various teacher conferences. Topics have included:

Bringing climate science and environmentalism into the social studies classroom

Supporting childhood survivors of sexual assault

Supporting trans and gender nonconforming youth

Designing using Universal Design for Learning practices

Accessible formatting

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

Anderson is professional and yet kind and loving, open and shares about her life and yet has good boundaries, works incredibly hard and takes the craft seriously, and yet practices and promotes a healthy work life balance. Students in her class feel supported and understood and safe to be themselves and thrive and learn.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 53

Application 1 of 2 for Todd Serpico

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Todd Serpico

Position: 5th grade teacher

School: Radnor Elementary School

School District if applicable: Radnor Township School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Aly Cunningham

Your relationship to the Nominee: parent of former students

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.**

As a parent of two former students, I have had the privilege of seeing firsthand the extraordinary impact Todd Serpico has on his students. Todd is a Pennsylvania-certified educator with over 25 years of experience providing direct instruction in elementary classrooms, and his dedication to both academic excellence and character development is evident every day. Since 2006, he has taught fifth grade at Radnor Elementary School in Radnor, Pennsylvania, where he consistently creates a classroom environment that challenges students intellectually while making them feel supported, confident, and valued. Todd's experience extends beyond his current role. Earlier in his career, he taught third grade at Garnet Valley Elementary School from 2001 to 2006, developing a strong foundation in meeting students where they are academically and socially. Since 2021, Todd has also served as a part-time adjunct professor at Eastern University, teaching a three-credit Child and Adolescent Development course for preservice education majors. It is reassuring to know that Todd is also helping to prepare future teachers with the same care and professionalism he brings to his own classroom. Todd's educational background reflects his commitment to lifelong learning. He earned a double major in Elementary Education and Special Education from Saint Joseph's

University, where he also served as a Graduate Assistant. He holds a Master's degree in Education, Reading Specialist certification, an Elementary Principal Certification from Eastern University, and was selected as a Writing Fellow in Elementary Education and Teaching at West Chester University. Todd's effectiveness is evident in his students' achievements. His classes earned statewide recognition in the Citizenship Challenge essay competition, placing third in the state in 2015–2016 and second in the state in 2024–2025. In 2016, Todd was honored with the Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award, a recognition that reflects the lasting impact he has on students and families. Recognizing him again ten years later would celebrate the sustained excellence he continues to bring to his work.

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

What sets Todd apart is how consistently he goes above and beyond for his students, both inside and outside the classroom. Todd has an ability to see children as whole individuals, not just students, and he makes an effort to show each child that they are valued. Several parents have shared examples of how Todd supports students well beyond the school day. One parent described how Todd made a point to attend their daughter's travel softball game to watch her pitch, something they had never experienced from a teacher before. Another family shared that Todd came to their son's State Championship basketball game in State College while he was already there supporting his own child. Still another parent shared that even after fifth-grade graduation, Todd continued to check in on former students who were trying out for and competing on a district baseball team during the summer. He followed along, watched games online, and celebrated their efforts, all while balancing a busy family life of his own. These moments leave a lasting impression on students and families and reinforce that Todd truly cares about who his students are beyond the classroom. Todd also goes above and beyond through personal connection and leadership development. One family shared that Todd took the time to call their home in the evening to check in on their son after noticing changes in classroom dynamics. Rather than making assumptions, Todd partnered thoughtfully with the family and relied on the student's leadership to help restore a positive tone in the classroom. Another parent shared how Todd's ability to understand his students made a lasting difference for their child. Todd recognized how active, energetic learners are motivated and found thoughtful ways to engage them, including occasional games of wiffle ball as a reward for hard work. This approach helped students feel seen and reinforced the message that effort and commitment are rewarded. Todd's dedication to going above and beyond is also

recognized by school leadership. As shared by our principal, Dr. Young, Todd's leadership strengthens instruction and supports students every day.

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 parent of three children in the school district, one of the qualities I most appreciate about Todd is the way he supports not only his own students, but the entire school community. Todd leads in a quiet, steady way that may often go unseen, yet it makes a meaningful difference for both staff and students. According to Dr. Young, Todd is a reliable and grounding presence in the building—someone others consistently depend on for support. That stability directly benefits our children. Todd's influence extends well beyond his classroom through his collaboration with fellow teachers. Colleagues describe him as someone who pushes others to be their best while offering support every step of the way. He readily collaborates by brainstorming new instructional ideas, problem-solving challenges, and working directly with students to meet diverse needs. His innovative mindset and ongoing commitment to growth inspire others to reflect and improve their own practice. Teachers have also shared how Todd's kindness and positivity foster a collaborative environment. One colleague recalled that when they first joined Radnor Elementary as a school counselor, Todd was among the first to reach out and even involved his students in helping welcome them to the community. While it may have seemed like a small gesture at the time, it left a lasting impression and speaks to Todd's thoughtfulness and belief that relationships matter. Todd is consistently described by peers as positive, creative, and generous with his time. No matter how busy he may be, he is always willing to step in and help, bringing warmth, humor, and a team-first mindset to his work. Todd's steady leadership, generosity, and commitment to collaboration make him an invaluable part of the school community.

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

Todd Serpico is a powerful role model because he consistently shows students what responsibility, dedication, and balance look like in real life. He leads by example in ways students notice and remember. Many students comment that Todd arrives at school early each morning—often before 7 a.m.—to prepare thoughtfully for the day. He is also known for always wearing a tie, a small but meaningful detail that signals pride in his profession and respect for his students. Todd also models the value of reflection and growth. Students are deeply impacted when former students, including high school

seniors preparing for graduation, return to Todd's classroom to share their experiences and lessons learned. Hearing these perspectives helps current students understand the long-term value of effort, perseverance, and character. Outside the classroom, Todd continues to model balance, curiosity, and resilience. As a parent of four and a dedicated educator for more than 25 years, he shows students that family and commitment matter. He also shares lessons from his experience as a small business owner, demonstrating thoughtful risk-taking, perseverance, and learning from challenges. In addition, his involvement in youth coaching shows students the importance of pursuing passions and giving back to the community. Todd doesn't just teach students how to succeed—he shows them what it looks like every day.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 54

Application 3 of 4 for Danielle Heller

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Danielle Heller

Position: First Grade Teacher

School: Media Elementary

School District if applicable: Rose Tree

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Shannan Asselta

Your relationship to the Nominee: Parent of 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.**

Second year teaching first grade at Media Elementary

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

Miss Heller went above and beyond a daily basis to provide a fun, dynamic, kind classroom environment. She integrated cutting edge technology and kept kids engaged and interested. She dedicated extra time to meet the needs of all her students, providing additional activities and challenge opportunities to those who would benefit. She was generous with her time, love and enthusiasm. My daughter now has a lifelong foundational love of learning because of Miss Heller

- 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 Heller supports her peers by introducing new and exciting technology

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

By demonstrating her passion for learning, reassuring all students that a classroom is a place to grow and excel

APPLICATION NUMBER: 55

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Camille Baker

Position: 4th Grade Teacher (Best Teacher)

School: Radnor Elementary School

School District if applicable: Radnor School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Liz Chakravarty

Your relationship to the Nominee: Parent of a child in her class last year; I served as her room parent as well

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. Camille Baker has taught over 40 years (4 years in parochial, 11 years in the Philadelphia School District, and almost 30 years at Radnor Elementary School. She has a B.A. in Psychology/Sociology from LaSalle University and a Reading Specialist Certification, M.Ed. from Holy Family University. She is the first one in her family to have attended and graduated from college. Her father was Japanese and mother German and Italian, and they were often ostracized for looking different. Instead of self-pity, her parents instead taught them the value and power of education and endless learning. She calls herself a lifelong learner, and this is portrayed in her teaching. Being a resident of Lower Moreland School District and having her children attend this school district, she has served 4 terms as a Board Member, Secretary, VP, and President.

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

I was fortunate to serve as Mrs. Baker's room parent last year, and directly see her interaction with the students, including my daughter. She held such a presence in the

classroom. When you are there, there is not one child who is not looking at her with absolute respect and concentration. Mrs. Baker is the epitome of the saying, "work hard, play hard." The kids in her class leave her class often overprepared for the next chapter. Mrs. Baker goes over and beyond both in the classroom and also outside. The list goes on with the tasks she takes on outside of the classroom that all have one common theme, which is the strive to do what is best for the child and making their road of education a positive and rich one. I'll do my best to pick the projects that I personally believe represent the core of who Mrs. Baker is as a teacher, advocate for her students, and partner to her students' parents. In an effort to raise awareness and an understanding of our world, including the struggles that people face every day, Mrs. Baker presented her students with a task which would show them how they can personally and directly help another person in need. She helped her fourth grade class present a check to 'New Leash on Life USA'. The non-profit rescues at-risk dogs from shelters, trains and places them with veterans with PTSD. Her students collected funds by performing extra chores in their homes. They were able to see that we can all as individuals make a difference in someone's life. As Mrs. Baker's room parent, I observed how she created unique ways of celebrating the kids and their learnings. One celebration included decorating the school's outside classroom with late 1960's décor, including attire, food, and music along with current events from this era. Mrs. Baker wanted to have the kids be able to visualize what this era looked and sounded like, as they had been reading about it for weeks. This was just another creative way Mrs. Baker brings books to life!

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. Baker also works with her peers to give every student the best opportunity to succeed. She led a study on the effect of school start times as it relates to a child's sleep and quality of life in and out of the classroom. The investigation was run by a committee comprised of RTSD staff members, parents, students and community members. Mrs. Baker dedicated her time outside of the school day through joining this committee in efforts to help children have the best chance of succeeding in school. The committee's tasks included educating the community about the identified national public health issue of chronic sleep deprivation in adolescents and the contributing factors and consequences, evaluating the impact on Radnor, and finally presenting a report and recommendations to the RTSD Administration and Superintendent by the end of the school year. Today, we are grateful that children at Radnor Elementary School begin school at 9:05am, giving them an extra hour of sleep, which has shown to increase

attention in the classroom and reduce the risk of being overweight and suffering from depression. Another example that delineates this extraordinary teacher is her efforts in getting the students to create good habits in taking care of the Earth. At Radnor Elementary School, already recognized as a "green school," every day is Earth Day, thanks to teachers like Mrs. Baker. Students work to reduce the amount of paper waste by packing "Less Trash Lunches & Snacks." Great efforts were made to reduce the amount of trash normally associated with a packed lunch, such as aluminum foil, or plastic wrap or the paper bag the lunch was packed in. She worked along side the administration to make RES green everyday, as the idea spread throughout the entire school. The school brought in those who work on our planet's wellness to talk with the students. Presentations made by Recycling Sally, an environmental educator/performer, Leo Bernabei, Radnor Township School District's director of operations, and Gayla McCluskey, chairperson of the Radnor Township Environmental Advisory Committee were brought into the students.

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

In our family, when picking which schools we wanted our children to attend and grow up in, Radnor was the obvious choice. As in many families at Radnor, one of the attributes we admire about our schools is diversity. Children need to learn that there is a life outside of the beautiful township of Radnor in which we live. They need to know that people look different, speak differently, and have different traditions than one another. Mrs. Baker incorporates learning and awareness into her classroom. Mrs. Baker was raised in an ethnically and culturally diverse family. Her father was Japanese, and mother German and Italian. She was consistently exposed to differences in culture, belief, language, food, religion, and social norms., and thus appreciates varying points-of-view. Mrs. Baker grew up in the 1960's when her family was not accepted by many neighbors because her father did not look like everyone else. Even though her father was born in the United States and fought in World War II, many ostracized him. Instead of taking the easier route filled with resentment under these circumstances, her parents counteracted this treatment by instilling self-confidence, a strong work ethic, and a deep appreciation for education in their children. Thus, Mrs. Baker excelled in school and became a lifelong learner. I believe education not only was innate within Mrs. Baker, but she herself says teaching is the only professional path she sought because she wanted all children to experience its powerful impact on their lives. Education is power.

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

Mrs. Baker instills the importance of education and its power in living a successful and good life, all while doing it with grace in accepting and respecting others, which really is everything in our world's future. She somehow helped children who struggled with behavior sit and really listen, while helping those kids fortunate with a natural gift of doing well with grades think even deeper. We are forever thankful and grateful for Mrs. Baker.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 56

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Neve Marino

Position: Third Grade 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: Dr. 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.**

Neve has been a teacher for nine years, and she is in her fourth year of teaching at Worrall. At Worrall, she has taught third grade, and she has been a fabulous addition to our staff. Neve is particularly good at helping students who are below grade level in Math, and she is pursuing graduate studies with a focus on someday being a Math Instructional Coach.

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

As soon as Neve joined our Worrall staff, she was looking for opportunities to serve students further. For example, she underwent a lengthy certification process to become the Head Coach of our Girls on the Run team. She was extremely dedicated to this extra-curricular activity, which includes in-depth lessons related to self-esteem and self-advocacy for our grades 3-5 participants. Many of the students did not have any running experience, and they were also in need of a strong female mentor. Neve was always an encouraging presence and helped each girl reach new goals and bloom. Neve also employs a wide variety of student centered teaching techniques, including

differentiated small group work, inventive and fun ways to approach content, all the while maintaining consistently high expectations for each and every student. She has a great rapport with her students, and parents specifically request for their children to be in her class due to this combination of supportive rapport and high expectations.

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.

Neve is an extremely active teacher leader. She participates in a variety of district level committees, including our Report Card Committee, Math Committee, and Technology Committee. She also participates in turn-around training, lending her expertise freely to her colleagues.

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

Neve is always a role model for her students. She continually models respect, caring, and inclusion. She gets students excited about learning through her own excitement. Neve is also an active participant in our yearly Character Education programming. She is always willing to take on silly roles in service to the students, including being a very sassy hare in our updated tortoise and hare skit for the whole school. She was a hit!

APPLICATION NUMBER: 57

Application 8 of 11 for Chassidy King

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Chassidy King

Position: Marketing Teacher

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable: William Penn

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Alie Sesay

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.**

This is Miss King's 2nd year here . She taught at Chester High School before she came to Penn Wood. She is a 10th-12 th grade Marketing Teacher.

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

Mrs. King has introduced any student looking for a wide range of jobs help with pursuing their dreams. On top of that Mrs. King brings in people so we can ask any questions we want to know about alot of jobs. Mrs. King also plans trips for our grade(11th) regardless of if she is losing money. Mrs. King puts her students first, getting us ready for the real world not just for the next grade or to meet school requirements and that is what I love the most about Mrs. King.

- 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. King has come together with other teachers to take down many problems here at Penn Wood but Mrs. King works especially with students. It wouldn't be exaggerating to say without Mrs. King Penn Wood's student voice would not have been heard and the peaceful protest would never have happened. Mrs. King always goes above and beyond putting student first constantly.

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

Mrs. King teaches us the importance of communicating and she shows this by constantly reminding us of its importance. Penn Wood has very bad communication and it's really dragging the school down so seeing at least one person still doing their best to communicate, I can't speak for others but has a great influence on me to communicate and by thought on how important it is.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 58

Application 4 of 4 for Danielle Heller

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Danielle Heller

Position: First grade teacher

School: Media Elementary School

School District if applicable: Rose Tree Media

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Sandi German

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.**

Danielle is a graduate of the RTM school district who is currently working towards her masters degree while working full time as a first grade teacher. She was a long term substitute for a year and has been a contracted teacher for three years.

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

Danielle goes above and beyond for her students by making school fun while they learn. She hosts RSVP readers in her classroom to give students opportunities to read with senior citizens in the community. She also participates in our school mentor program. Danielle also pairs with a 5th grade class in the building. The students work together reading and doing activities together for relationship building.

- 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.**

Danielle is an excellent teammate. She contributes to our team meetings, share a new creativity to our lessons and she is our grade level coordinator. Danielle displays leadership skills and the ability to advocate for her students. She is a member of our school PBIS team. Each month she attends a meeting prior to her school day to improve the behavior and create a positive climate in our building.

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

Danielle is a role model to her students. She is currently being trained for the Responsive Classroom initiative in our building. Danielle is using the techniques to assist her students and others with problem solving. She demonstrates a patient, calm, and encouraging demeanor that in turn creates a caring and productive classroom environment for her students. She has a child who is frequently absent but not ill and she has worked with his parent and the school to create an environment in her classroom where he is thriving and his attendance has increased.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 59

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Michele Dougherty

Position: Teacher

School: Russell Elementary School

School District if applicable: Marple Newtown

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Brett D Thomas

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.**

25 years plus teaching, 4th grade teacher. Masters in Ed

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

Michele Dougherty is the steady heartbeat of fourth grade at Russell Elementary. Year after year, she brings the same calm energy, clear routines, and genuine care that make her classroom a place where every student feels safe and capable. Her passion for science turns everyday lessons into hands-on adventures— Michele makes her students fall in love with wondering "why" and "how." She finds creative ways to support struggling readers, and celebrates every small victory with the same enthusiasm. Her recent growth scores speak for themselves: among the highest in the district, especially in science and math, with many students jumping a full grade level or more.

- 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.**

Michele sets high expectations and quietly refuses to let any child fall through the cracks. Colleagues lean on her for advice, borrow her lessons, and count on her positive spirit in the staff lounge

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

She finds creative ways to support struggling readers, and celebrates every small victory with the same enthusiasm. With excellent classroom management and a well-timed sense of humor that keeps nine-year-olds focused and laughing, Michele creates a room where learning feels natural. Russell Elementary is a stronger school because of Michele Dougherty's daily dedication. She is most deserving of Teacher of the Year.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 60

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Ms Clark

Position: Teacher

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable: William Penn School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Mariyah Fletcher

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 used to live & taught in China. She soon after came to the US to teach students like me. Ever since she has been going the extra mile to make sure her students are okay and actual learning.

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

She checks on us when we are down.

- 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 gives us extra work to ensure the workm stays in our heads.

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

APPLICATION NUMBER: 61
Application 9 of 11 for Chassidy King

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Chassidy King

Position: teacher

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable:

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Fabiana Laveau

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 teaches a high school Introduction to real estate class, this is her first year teaching it but she teaches a marketing class in the middle school.

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

She brings in guest speakers and does games so everyone even those who aren't interested can participate and gain 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.**

She provides extra credit and talks with students to work with them, understanding that life happens.

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

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

She continues to tie her lessons to the real world, other than teaching us about real estate her other main objective is to prepare us for life, other teachers might say this but never act on it, she has sit downs with us and discuss how she wants to see us doing better than her in the future and she'll work along side us to make that happen.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 62

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Christine Regino

Position: Kindergarten Library, STEM, and Science Teacher

School: Interboro Kindergarten Academy

School District if applicable: Interboro School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Jonathan Regino

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.**

Christine Regino is a highly accomplished educator with 20 years of dedicated service, currently teaching at the Kindergarten level. This remarkable tenure demonstrates a deep, sustained commitment to early childhood education and foundational learning. Her expertise is broad and innovative, spanning multiple critical subject areas for young learners, including traditional Kindergarten coursework, Kindergarten STEM, Kindergarten Science, and Kindergarten Library. This diverse instructional background shows her commitment to integrating modern, cross-curricular concepts into the earliest years of schooling. Christine holds strong professional credentials, including a Certified PreK-5 qualification and an Early Childhood certification, confirming her specialized expertise in the developmental needs of young students. Crucially, she also holds an Autism Endorsement, highlighting her dedication to inclusive education and providing specialized support to meet the needs of all learners in her classroom. Her two decades of service, combined with her innovative teaching roles and specialized endorsements, make her an exceptional candidate for the FMFCU Excellence in Teaching Award.

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

Christine Regino demonstrates her dedication by creating equitable opportunities for all students, ensuring every child can participate fully in the curriculum. A prime example of her commitment to inclusivity is her decision to create a dedicated class for students with Autism. She recognized that these learners deserved to partake in the same exciting Science and STEM adventures occurring in other Kindergarten classrooms. To best serve this population, she went above and beyond her duties by working to earn an Autism Endorsement, seeking the specialized knowledge necessary to meet their unique needs. Her commitment extends far beyond the school day and the academic year. Christine runs a highly popular monthly book night, where families from the community are invited to read together and complete a craft based on the chosen story. This effort builds a crucial early literacy culture and strengthens the bond between the school and home. Thank you for sharing those powerful examples of Christine Regino's dedication! These stories truly highlight her "Heart of Learning" and commitment to inclusive education. Here is the draft response for the second section, staying well under the 350-word limit.

2. Going Above and Beyond 🌟 Use specific examples or stories to describe how this teacher has gone above and beyond for his or her students. Christine Regino demonstrates her dedication by creating equitable opportunities for all students, ensuring every child can participate fully in the curriculum. A prime example of her commitment to inclusivity is her decision to create a dedicated class for students with Autism. She recognized that these learners deserved to partake in the same exciting Science and STEM adventures occurring in other Kindergarten classrooms. To best serve this population, she went above and beyond her duties by working to earn an Autism Endorsement, seeking the specialized knowledge necessary to meet their unique needs. Her commitment extends far beyond the school day and the academic year. Christine runs a highly popular monthly book night, where families from the community are invited to read together and complete a craft based on the chosen story. This effort builds a crucial early literacy culture and strengthens the bond between 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.

Christine Regino serves as a constant resource and an innovative leader for her colleagues, fostering excellence through personalized professional development and inclusive resource sharing. Recognizing that every teacher has unique professional growth needs, Christine took the initiative to fill her classroom library with books

specifically for educators in her building. This act transformed her personal space into an informal professional development hub, allowing colleagues to pursue personalized learning on their own schedules. This provides crucial, just-in-time resources that elevate the instructional quality across grade levels. Furthermore, Christine is an unparalleled advocate for meeting children's unique needs in all classrooms, not just her own. Leveraging her expertise and her role in the library, she ensures her colleagues have the necessary literary resources to foster empathy and understanding among students. For example, if a peer has a student who uses a wheelchair, Christine is ready with specific picture books to help the class discuss differences and promote inclusion. This proactive approach supports her peers in managing challenging social situations with grace and expertise, leading to a more compassionate and informed school culture overall. Her work in providing these tangible, immediate resources makes her an indispensable partner in creating an excellent and equitable learning environment.

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

Christine Regino serves as a powerful role model by demonstrating the importance of civic pride, engagement, and community spirit to her young students. She exemplifies what it means to be an active, supportive member of a local community, whether or not she officially resides there. Her commitment is visible and genuine. Christine consistently attends various community events, including school plays, sporting events, and local community days. She makes a conscious effort to be present for her students and their families, using these opportunities to show support and pride in everything they do. This active presence makes children feel seen, valued, and connected to their school and neighbors. Furthermore, Christine actively participates in the local economy and social fabric. She intentionally shops, eats, and helps build up the community. This consistent behavior models responsibility and commitment, traits that are essential for future citizens. Her involvement is so seamless and authentic that one would assume she grew up and lives in the community. By embedding herself in the local culture, Christine teaches her students the invaluable lesson that being a great neighbor and citizen is just as important as being a great student. She models the kind of person they should strive to become: caring, supportive, and deeply invested in the success of their local environment.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 63

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Mahtab Chaudhry

Position: Teacher

School: Penn wood high school

School District if applicable: William Penn School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Jazmin

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's recived awards at your other schools in Philadelphia.

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

Ms. Chaudhry cares deeply about the students. She pushes them she's helped me with my own personal problems

- 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 has been nice , respectful and extremely caring.

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

She shows us how to deal with confilict and pain. You can go about everything in a postive attitude

APPLICATION NUMBER: 64

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Elizabeth Howe-Consiglio

Position: French Teacher

School: Springton Lake Middle School

School District if applicable: Rose Tree Media

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Enrico Mazza

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.**

Madame Howe just earned her Master Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. She has been teaching for 5 years and is currently teaching at the middle school she previously was a student. During her short time at Springton Lake middle School she has nearly doubled the enrollment of students taking French. Most Students cite her enthusiasm and excellent teaching methods. Madame Howe runs and after-school french club and is a member of the equity team at springton Lake.

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

She regularly hosts activities that expose students to French culture such as making crepes and soda making. Most of these activities are paid out of her own pocket. She stays after school to tutor students and offers her prep and lunch time to support her students and colleagues. e

- 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.**

Madame Howe is currently mentoring a first year French teacher. She is always the first to offer her support to administration when there are staffing shortages during school events. She collaborates with the other world language teachers to host activities that bring several classes of students together (St. Nicholas celebration, World Language Fete).

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

She is always kind, fair, and willing to listen to student perspective. She attends students' performances such as the Nutcracker and she uses her own free time to support students' extracurricular activities. She consistently treats her students with dignity and respect and empowers them to not only be better students, but to also be kind human beings.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 65

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Gayle Barwick-Collins

Position: Art Teacher

School: Radnor Middle School

School District if applicable: Radnor Twp

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: David Wiedlich

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 am honored to nominate Ms. Gayle Barwick-Collins, our exceptional 6th–8th grade Art teacher at Radnor Middle School, for the Excellence in Teaching Award. Ms. Barwick-Collins exemplifies creativity, dedication, and passion in every aspect of her teaching. Her courses provide students with rich opportunities to explore diverse media and techniques while fostering critical thinking and self-expression. From tempera painting and copper repousse in 6th grade to clay slab construction, basketry, and pop art in 7th grade, and culminating in advanced projects like acrylic self-portraits and sculptural clay cubes in 8th grade, Ms. Barwick-Collins ensures that every student experiences the full spectrum of artistic processes. Beyond technical skills, she emphasizes the creative process, problem-solving, and the ability to communicate ideas visually. Her classroom is a vibrant space where students feel empowered to take risks, develop confidence, and discover their unique artistic voices. Ms. Barwick-Collins is truly student-centered and all about kids. She goes above and beyond by running a year-long Art Club, giving students additional opportunities to explore their creativity and build community outside of class. Her commitment to fostering a supportive, inclusive environment ensures that every child feels valued and inspired. Her impact extends far beyond the art room, she nurtures a culture of inclusivity and inspires a lifelong appreciation for the

arts. Her unwavering dedication and ability to ignite creativity in young minds make her truly deserving of this recognition. Thank you for considering this nomination.

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

Ms. Barwick-Collins consistently goes above and beyond for her students: Year-Long Art Club: She voluntarily runs an after-school Art Club throughout the year, giving students extra time and resources to pursue their passions and collaborate on creative projects. Personalized Support: She often spends her own time helping students refine their work, whether it's staying after school to assist with a complex sculpture or guiding a student through color theory for a painting competition. Showcasing Student Work: She organizes displays of student artwork in school hallways and community spaces, ensuring students feel proud and recognized for their efforts. Creating Opportunities: Ms. Barwick-Collins connects students with local art contests and exhibitions, encouraging them to share their talents beyond the classroom. Building Relationships: She knows her students personally, celebrates their successes, and creates a safe, inclusive environment where every child feels valued and inspired.

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 a true team player who works closely with colleagues to create an engaging and supportive school environment: She collaborates with core subject teachers to integrate art into interdisciplinary projects, such as using visual art to enhance social studies units or science concepts. She partners with colleagues to design cross-curricular experiences that allow students to explore creativity through multiple lenses. She contributes to school-wide events like art showcases and varied celebrations, coordinating with staff to ensure these programs highlight student talent and foster community pride. She shares best practices during department meetings and professional development sessions, offering strategies for incorporating creativity and visual thinking into all classrooms. Her impact extends far beyond the art room, she nurtures a culture of collaboration and creativity that benefits the entire school community. Her unwavering dedication and ability to inspire both students and peers make her truly deserving of this recognition.

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

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

Ms. Barwick-Collins models perseverance, creativity, and kindness every day. She demonstrates that art is not just about talent, it's about effort and growth. For example: When a student struggled with a self-portrait project, Ms. Barwick-Collins patiently worked alongside them, showing how mistakes can lead to breakthroughs. She openly shares her own creative process, including challenges she faces when creating art, teaching students that problem-solving and resilience are essential skills. Her commitment to community shines through when she organizes art displays for school events, teaching students the importance of sharing their gifts to inspire others. Students often say that her positivity and belief in their potential make them feel valued and capable of achieving more than they imagined. Her actions teach students responsibility, empathy, and the joy of lifelong learning. She is not only an outstanding educator but a mentor who inspires confidence and creativity in every child she teaches.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 66

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Laurie Kowalski

Position: 11th grade, American Literature

School: Penn wood high school

School District if applicable: William Penn school district

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Kweli

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.**

im not sure

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

When I missed a week of school because i was depressed she was the only teacher to call my mom to check on me and to make sure i was okay. it made me want to go back to school because i knew there was someone there who cared about me

- 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.**

Her teaching style is explaining and going over the assignment and then we do it by ourselves. I like this because it allows me to ask questions while doing the assignment if needed

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

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

Last year she graduated and got her masters I believe. Her students threw her a small party and made a poster and brought snacks and everything. Her students from last year wouldn't of done this if they didnt look up to her and appreciate her.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 67

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Winnie Chan

Position: High School Biology and environmental science

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.**

Winnie is a Philly transplant from San Francisco. She has been teaching for over 15 years in Philadelphia public high schools. Winnie attended UC San Diego for her undergraduate degree in Biology and Temple University for her Masters degree in coding and Biotechnology. Here at Furness High School, Winnie helped run the freshmen academy, setting up students for success as they begin their high school career. Winnie also took a leave from the School District of Philadelphia and taught for two years in Japan. There she taught younger children an introduction to science. When she returned to Furness she moved into teaching primarily Biology and Environmental Science to English Language Learners.

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

Winnie regularly engages her students well. As a leader in the freshmen academy she organized trips and activities to help the students feel connected to the school community. Additionally, she ran the community service corps and scheduled volunteer activities for students. Currently, Winnie is a leader of the running club at school. She

runs with students on weekdays and some Saturdays to prepare them for runs around the city. Winnie creates activities for her students to help them learn to love science.

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 taught with Winnie for nine years. We have worked together to build curriculum and plan collaboratively to engage our biology students. Our students need to be prepared for the Biology Keystone exam, where the stakes are high. Together we organize activities that really engage the students and help them learn while taking the pressure off of planning for the exam. We also plan many field trips to break up our year and get our students out of the classroom.

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

It is easy to see Winnie as a role model. She works tirelessly to make her lessons accessible to her students and her students rise to the occasion. Her students' language levels range from speaking no English to very proficient in English. She is able to structure her classroom environment that allows all students to be successful, while holding them to high standards. Winnie incorporates a lot of pictures into lessons so that the students can learn the language better as they learn science. Every student is treated with care as she does the research and work to make a well rounded learning environment.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 68

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: 45973

Position: john

School: penn wood high school

School District if applicable: William Penn school district

County of School: Philadelphia County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: John Kaoma

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.**

okay

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

ion know

- 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.**

shes well put together and understand the students

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

she encourages students to focus and the right decisions

APPLICATION NUMBER: 70

Application 11 of 11 for Chassidy King

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Chassidy King

Position: Teacher

School: penn wood high school

School District if applicable: william penn school district

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: toni brice

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.**

shes big on real estate and a big impst in many peoples lives

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

shes brung in many special guest for ys

- 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 does everything in her power even on her bad days

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

she keeps them going

APPLICATION NUMBER: 71

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Ellen O'brian

Position: teacher

School: Penn wood high school

School District if applicable:

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Makaylah Busch

Your relationship to the Nominee: a proud 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.**

miss O'brain has been teaching for i belive over 15+ years and she's a great teacher

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

when she is teaching us she makes sure that we understand what's going on fully so we can understand the worls once were out of 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.**

she's very understaning but frim with us

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

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

every single day she has us come in and do 10 full sentences and tells us if you can't write 10 full sentences then what are you going to do whwn somw asking you to do bigger out there in world

APPLICATION NUMBER: 72

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Lindsay Toriello-Uliasz

Position: Life Skills Teacher

School: Paxon Hollow MS

School District if applicable: MNSD

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Thomas John Gretchen

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.**

Lindsay Uliasz is an accomplished and highly skilled special educator with extensive experience supporting students with complex learning and adaptive needs. She currently serves as the Life Skills teacher at Paxon Hollow Middle School, where she works with students in grades 6–8. Lindsay holds Pennsylvania certification in Special Education and has completed advanced training in individualized programming, functional academics, and adaptive skill instruction. Throughout her career, she has continued to pursue professional learning in areas such as behavior support, assistive technology, and inclusive practices to ensure that every student receives the highest level of care and instruction. With a strong background in evidence-based instruction and multidisciplinary collaboration, Lindsay has established herself as a leader within our school community. Her achievements extend beyond the classroom: she has built successful partnerships with related-service providers, developed engaging peer programs, and created learning opportunities that connect academic and functional instruction in authentic, meaningful ways. Her educational training and ongoing commitment to professional growth are reflected daily in the exceptional quality of the program she provides for our students.

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

One of the clearest examples of Lindsay going above and beyond occurred during a community-based instruction trip to the grocery store. One of her students, who struggled significantly with anxiety in public settings, had never independently selected and purchased an item before. Lindsay spent weeks preparing him through individualized role-play, visual supports, and one-on-one coaching. On the day of the trip, the student successfully walked through the store, chose his item, interacted with the cashier, and completed the purchase—all with Lindsay gently encouraging him from a distance to foster independence. When he turned around holding the receipt, smiling from ear to ear, Lindsay celebrated him like he had just won a championship. His parents later shared that he insisted on showing the receipt to everyone at home because it was "the first thing I ever bought myself." This moment is just one example of how Lindsay's careful planning, deep patience, and unwavering belief in her students open doors that families once thought were closed. Lindsay consistently supports students with some of the most personal and intensive needs—helping them brush their teeth and hair, changing diapers for adolescents who cannot do so independently, and providing daily care with sensitivity and dignity. One afternoon, a student became distraught after an accident that required a full clothing change. While others may have treated this as a procedural task, Lindsay approached it with compassion and reassurance. She spoke softly to the student, helped him regulate, and ensured he maintained privacy. Later that day, the student returned to class smiling, participating, and ready to learn. His mother emailed that evening saying, "I wish everyone in the world treated my child the way Lindsay does." Moments like this happen daily in her classroom—quiet acts of humanity that demonstrate the extraordinary heart and professionalism she brings to 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.

Lindsay is a highly collaborative educator who consistently elevates the practice of those around her. Her classroom is not only a well-structured learning environment for her Life Skills students—it has become a model of inclusive, student-centered instruction for the entire school. Peers look to Lindsay because she brings clarity, compassion, and practical solutions to complex instructional and behavioral challenges. One example of her collaborative leadership is the way she partners with general education teachers to support students who receive Life Skills services in mainstream classes. Rather than

simply sending paraprofessionals or accommodations, Lindsay meets with teachers to review lesson plans, suggest scaffolds, and create individualized visuals that enable students to access grade-level content. Many teachers have shared that they now use Lindsay's visual supports for the entire class because they improve clarity and engagement for all learners—not just her students. Lindsay has also strengthened peer-to-peer learning through programs like Best Buddies and her student-operated Flower Shop. In both initiatives, she works closely with staff across grade levels to coordinate schedules, design activities, and ensure that all participating students—both those with disabilities and their neurotypical buddies—experience meaningful, authentic learning. Teachers frequently comment that their students return from these activities more empathetic, confident, and motivated. These programs would not exist without Lindsay's collaboration, creativity, and willingness to take on extra responsibilities for the benefit of the broader school community. Another example of her partnership with colleagues occurred during the rollout of community-based instruction outings. Recognizing that many teachers had questions about how these trips connected to functional academics, Lindsay voluntarily led informal professional learning sessions to walk her peers through the goals, planning processes, and instructional benefits. Her colleagues left with a deeper understanding of the Life Skills curriculum—and a stronger appreciation for the role her program plays within the school. Whether she is coordinating with paraprofessionals, collaborating with related-service providers, planning cross-grade partnerships, or supporting classroom teachers, Lindsay consistently models excellence. She brings out the best in her peers because she leads with humility, expertise, and a genuine belief that when adults work together, students thrive.

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

Lindsay is an extraordinary role model for her students because she demonstrates daily what patience, resilience, compassion, and confidence look like in action. For many of her students, she is the person who shows them that they are capable, valued, and worthy of dignity—no matter their challenges or disabilities. Her calm presence, positivity, and unwavering belief in each child set the standard for how they learn to believe in themselves. One way Lindsay models these qualities is through her approach to problem-solving and perseverance. When a student struggles with a functional skill—whether learning to tie a shoe, brush their teeth independently, or navigate a community setting—Lindsay never gives up. She breaks down the task, celebrates small

wins, and teaches her students that making mistakes is part of learning. One student once told another teacher, "I keep trying because Ms. U always keeps trying with me." That mindset shift, sparked by her example, changed the way he approached challenges in every part of his day. She also models kindness and empathy in powerful, everyday ways. During the Flower Shop deliveries, Lindsay teaches her students to make eye contact, use a greeting, and share kindness through their interactions. The pride they feel when delivering flowers to staff is a direct reflection of the confidence she has instilled in them. Students internalize her message: being kind makes you stronger, not weaker. Another moment that demonstrates her role-modeling happened during a community outing at Home Depot. A student became overwhelmed when asked to interact with an employee. Instead of stepping in to do it for him, Lindsay crouched down beside him, spoke softly, and showed him how to ask for help using his communication device. When he finally approached the employee and completed the task, Lindsay reminded him, "You were brave even when you were nervous." He later shared that he wanted to "be brave like Ms. U." That is the impact she has—modeling courage that her students can imitate. Lindsay is the adult who shows students how to care for others, how to care for themselves, and how to believe in their own potential. She exemplifies patience, integrity, and compassion in every interaction. Her students do not just learn academic and functional skills from her—they learn how to carry themselves in the world with confidence and kindness. She is a role model in the truest sense: someone whose daily actions inspire her students to become the best versions of themselves.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 73

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Travor morris

Position: n/A

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable: N/A

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Travor morris

Your relationship to the Nominee: N/A

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.**

N/A

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

Ms king went above and beyond by offering after-school writing workshops, providing individualized feedback and helping students gain confidence and college acceptances.

- 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.**

N/A

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

N/A

APPLICATION NUMBER: 74

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: David Brigg

Position: English teacher

School: Penn wood high school

School District if applicable: Penn wood district

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Kormunah Nyankon

Your relationship to the Nominee: My 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.**

Mr. David Brigg has been teaching for many years. He teaches his subject very well and knows a lot about it. He has the right certificates to teach, and he keeps learning new ways to help students. He is respected in the school because he works hard and cares about students.

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

Mr. Brigg always does extra for his students. He stays after class to help people who need more time. He checks on students when they look confused or stressed. One time he talked to a student who was having a bad week and helped them feel better. He makes lessons simple and fun so everyone can understand.

- 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. Brigg is very helpful to other teachers. He shares ideas and work with them. He helps new teachers learn the school rules. He steps in when someone needs help or support. He has a positive attitude that makes the school better for everyone.

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

Mr. Brigg is a good role model because he is kind and patient. He treats all students fairly. He shows students how to calm down and solve problems the right way. When students argue, he helps them talk it out. Students look up to him because he makes the classroom safe and respectful.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 75

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Alyce Grunt

Position: Art Teacher

School: Penn Wood High School

School District if applicable: William Penn School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Avery Raudenbush

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.**

Ms. Grunt is an art teacher at Penn Wood High School, teaching students from 10th-12th grade the techniques in art creation. The subjects she teaches are Intro Drawing, Studio Portfolio I/II, and AP/Studio Portfolio III. Ms. Grunt has been teaching at Penn Wood for 21 years, since 2004, and holds six honors and rewards for her work in art.

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

Ms. Grunt is a very patient and kind teacher, making sure to approach every situation with a grand amount of kindness no matter who the student is. She's provided accommodations to many students, including myself at one point, in any case where they're having trouble with work in order to ensure their grade stays high.

- 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. Grunt is a primarily solo teacher, so all of the moments I've seen of her in class have been a result of her alone.

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

Ms. Grunt is a role model as she approaches every situation she can with compassion and kindness. Her work and lack of judgement with kids that are special needs shines through as well and is something I believe everyone should take after.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 76

Application 2 of 3 for Keith Layman

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Keith Layman

Position: Social Studies Teacher and Department Chair

School: Garnet Valley High School

School District if applicable: Garnet Valley School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Haley Butler

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.**

Keith Layman brings over 25 years of experience in education, having taught Social Studies across all high school levels, academic to Advanced Placement, in all four grade levels. As Department Chair, he leads with innovation, compassion, and deep content expertise. His knowledge of curriculum and subject matter is unmatched, and he remains well-informed on current educational issues, effectively balancing the complex political landscape of public education. A key member of our Instructional Cabinet, Keith has played a vital role in developing initiatives such as the Instructional Leadership Team, which researches and analyzes district-wide best practices. He is a respected leader among both students and peers. He is humble, highly involved, and deeply committed to the growth of our school community.

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

Keith Layman's commitment to student development extends far beyond the classroom. He has served as a dedicated advisor to several student organizations, including Interact

Club, Student Council, Mock Trial, Speech and Debate, Class Advisor, and Youth and Government. Through these roles, he has fostered leadership, civic engagement, and a strong sense of community among students. His work with the Interact Club's "Dinner and a Show" event, which brings together students and senior members of our community, is just one example of the inclusive and thoughtful programs he supports. Keith is also a consistent presence at school functions such as Mini-thon, sporting events, parent events, and community programs—showing his deep care for the broader Garnet Valley community and his belief in the power of connection.

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've had the opportunity to work closely with Keith Layman on both the District and Building Instructional Impact Teams. His leadership and insight have been instrumental in shaping high-level instructional initiatives, including the successful launch of peer-to-peer classroom visits across all grade levels. Keith brings a balanced voice to the table—he listens closely, collaborates thoughtfully with colleagues and administration, and consistently focuses on practices that elevate teaching and learning. As a department leader, he organizes PLCs and sets meaningful goals that directly improve student learning and growth. His ability to connect strategy with day-to-day instruction makes him a vital contributor to our instructional vision.

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

Keith Layman is a true role model. Not only by title, but through his actions each day. He shows up with consistency, care, and quiet strength that students and staff alike rely on. He listens, not just to reply, but to understand. His presence in the classroom offers stability, and his encouragement often becomes the push a student didn't know they needed. My own daughter was fortunate to have him as a teacher, and it was in his current events class that her interest in law first sparked. That's the kind of teacher Keith is, the one who opens doors for students simply by creating space for curiosity and new ideas. He communicates with clarity and respect, always making students feel heard. He encourages those who need extra support and helps them see their own potential. He's never afraid to challenge students to take a risk, to think more deeply, to grow. Keith believes in his students, and they know it. That belief often becomes the difference between doubt and confidence, between standing still and moving forward.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 77

Application 3 of 3 for Keith Layman

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Keith Layman

Position: Social Studies Teacher / Department Chair

School: Garnet Valley High School

School District if applicable: Garnet Valley School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Joseph Kingsborough

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.**

Keith Layman has proudly served the students of Garnet Valley High School for more than 25 years. Throughout his career, he has taught a range of social studies courses and is currently responsible for Sociology and Sport, Current Issues, and AP United States History. His extensive experience in secondary education has allowed him to develop deep content expertise, strong instructional strategies, and a long-standing commitment to student success. Mr. Layman holds the appropriate Pennsylvania teaching certifications in Social Studies, qualifying him to teach multiple disciplines within the field. Over the course of his career, he has been recognized for his dedication to academic excellence, his ability to build meaningful student connections, and his consistent contributions to the high school's social studies program. His more than two decades in the classroom reflect not only his passion for teaching but also his ongoing commitment to fostering critical thinking, civic awareness, and intellectual curiosity among his students.

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

Keith is someone we can consistently count on to take the lead on important district and high school initiatives, often stepping forward without being asked. Whether supporting curriculum development, organizing department-wide efforts, or contributing to schoolwide programs, he brings a steady, solutions-oriented approach that strengthens the entire learning community. He also goes above and beyond by opening his classroom to newer teachers, inviting them to observe effective instructional strategies and strong classroom management in real time. These visits have become invaluable learning opportunities, as younger educators are able to see best practices modeled by a veteran teacher who is both approachable and reflective. Keith is always willing to debrief afterward, offering thoughtful insights, practical suggestions, and reassurance that helps colleagues grow in their craft. Perhaps most importantly, Keith brings a genuine passion for teaching that is evident in the way he designs lessons, engages students, and builds relationships. He consistently provides optimal learning opportunities for all students, regardless of background or ability level. Whether it's adapting instructional materials, incorporating real-world connections in courses like Sociology and Sport or Current Issues, or challenging AP U.S. History students with rigorous and relevant content, Keith ensures every learner feels supported and capable. His willingness to mentor colleagues, champion initiatives, and continually elevate the student experience demonstrates the profound impact he has had on Garnet Valley High School for more than two decades.

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.

Keith has consistently demonstrated what it means to work collaboratively with his colleagues to elevate instruction across the building. As our ambassador for bringing the Instructional Playbook to life, he not only understands the strategies within it but models them daily, showing teachers what high-quality implementation looks like in a real classroom. A clear example of this leadership is the way Keith routinely invites peers into his classroom to observe engagement techniques, formative assessment strategies, and discussion structures in action. Younger teachers have shared that watching Keith facilitate a student-led discussion or break down complex concepts in AP U.S. History has helped them adjust their own practice with greater confidence and clarity. He makes these visits low-pressure and collaborative, often following up with supportive conversations, resources, and encouragement. Keith is also a trusted partner during PLC work and department initiatives. When the team was refining common assessments, Keith helped lead the conversation by sharing sample questions, discussing alignment with standards, and working through student data alongside his peers. His ability to

balance professionalism with humility creates an environment where colleagues feel comfortable sharing ideas, asking questions, and trying new approaches. In addition, Keith is the first to pilot instructional strategies from the playbook—such as structured academic conversations, real-time checks for understanding, or lesson design templates—and then share his results with the team. His willingness to experiment, reflect, and model best practices has empowered others to do the same, ultimately strengthening instruction schoolwide. Through his mentorship, collaboration, and steady leadership, Keith has helped create a culture where teachers feel supported, confident, and motivated to deliver excellence in the classroom. His influence extends far beyond his own students and has positively shaped the professional growth of educators throughout the building.

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

Keith serves as an outstanding role model for his students, demonstrating every day what it means to be committed, dependable, and deeply invested in the growth of young people. His influence extends far beyond classroom instruction, as he consistently looks for ways to help students develop confidence, leadership skills, and a sense of belonging. One of the clearest examples of this is his dedication to sponsoring several student clubs, including Speech and Debate and Student Council. Through these roles, Keith provides students with meaningful opportunities to challenge themselves, explore their interests, and grow in ways that traditional coursework cannot always offer. In Speech and Debate, students frequently share how Keith's calm, encouraging demeanor helps them step outside their comfort zones—whether it's preparing for their first tournament or learning to craft persuasive, well-reasoned arguments. His ability to coach students through pressure-filled moments teaches them resilience, preparation, and poise. As a Student Council advisor, Keith models leadership by empowering students to take ownership of school events, collaborate with peers, and solve problems creatively. His guidance during planning sessions—particularly when schedules, logistics, or unexpected challenges arise—shows students how to work through obstacles with professionalism and teamwork. Many students look back on these experiences as moments when they first recognized their own ability to lead. Inside the classroom, Keith reinforces these same values. He treats every student with respect, listens carefully to their perspectives, and maintains high expectations while providing the support they need to succeed. Students routinely describe him as someone they trust,

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

someone who believes in them, and someone who challenges them to think critically and responsibly about the world around them. Through his leadership, mentorship, and unwavering commitment to student opportunities, Keith has become a role model whose impact extends well beyond his 25+ years at Garnet Valley High School.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 78

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Jennifer Carvalho

Position: Kinder Teacher

School: Marianna Bracetti Academy Charter School

School District if applicable: Philadelphia School District

County of School: Philadelphia County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: David Carvalho

Your relationship to the Nominee: Spouse 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.**

Jennifer Carvalho is a dedicated educator with 20 years of teaching experience in urban education, beginning her career in Chester before continuing in Philadelphia. She has spent her entire career teaching elementary students, making a profound impact on hundreds of children across her two decades of service. Jennifer has taught multiple grade levels and holds all necessary certifications for her work in urban elementary education. Over the years, she has consistently achieved high levels of student engagement and growth, with many of her former students going on to achieve significant academic and personal success. Throughout her career, Jennifer has demonstrated a commitment to excellence and professional growth. She has not only excelled in her classroom but has also taken on leadership roles, serving as grade leader, where she has influenced colleagues through mentorship, collaboration, and guidance. Her dedication to student learning, coupled with her ability to lead and inspire her peers, highlights her as a well-rounded and accomplished educator whose contributions extend beyond the classroom.

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

I have had the privilege of working with Jennifer for more than 10 years, often as her grade partner, and I have witnessed firsthand the level of care, consistency, and professionalism she brings to her work every single day. Jennifer's classroom is a place where students feel safe, supported, and genuinely loved. She creates an environment where every child—regardless of background, challenges, or previous school experiences—feels capable of growing and achieving. Her approach is rooted in patience, empathy, and high expectations, and she has an extraordinary ability to help even the most reluctant learners believe in themselves. One of the clearest examples of her effectiveness is the progress her students make not only academically but socially and emotionally. Jennifer is known for taking students who are struggling behaviorally or academically and transforming their outlook through consistent support and well-structured routines. I have seen students who entered the year angry, discouraged, or disconnected leave her classroom confident, motivated, and proud of their accomplishments. Families regularly share how Jennifer has changed the trajectory of their children's lives, offering guidance and encouragement at moments when they needed it most.

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's contributions to education extend far beyond her classroom. As the grade leader, she has influenced her colleagues through thoughtful planning, clear communication, and a collaborative leadership style that always keeps student needs at the center. Her ability to bring people together, support new teachers, and set a positive tone has been essential to our team's success. She is the type of leader who elevates everyone around her. In addition to being her colleague, I am also Jennifer's husband and her supervisor—roles that allow me to see her through every lens of her life as an educator. I have the unique perspective of watching her not only teach her students with patience and purpose but also nurture and guide our own children with that same level of intention and heart. In all facets of her life—teacher, leader, mother—Jennifer holds herself to the highest standard. Her values, integrity, and deep commitment to children are consistent in everything she does, and it is one of the many reasons she is so admired. One story that truly captures Jennifer's approach involves a student, Michael, who joined her class in Kinder struggling with sight words and often disengaged in class. Rather than lowering expectations or letting him fall behind, Jennifer took the time to get to know Michael personally—what he liked, what motivated him, and the challenges he faced. She created individualized reading goals for him and celebrated every small milestone along the way. Jennifer also held him

accountable in a kind but firm way. She would tell him, "I know you can do this, and I won't give up on you—but you have to do your part too." Through her guidance and encouragement, Michael gradually gained confidence in his sight-word abilities, started participating more in class, and by the end of the year, he had not only caught up to grade level but developed a love for looking for words that he knew in books.

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

From Chester to Philadelphia, Jennifer Carvalho has spent 20 years championing urban students and investing in their futures. Her influence is woven into the lives of students who continue to carry her lessons with them, into the colleagues who are better teachers because of her partnership, and into the culture of the school community she has helped shape. She represents the very best of our profession, and she is deeply deserving of recognition. I wholeheartedly and proudly nominate her. In addition to her outstanding work in the classroom, Jennifer has served as village lead, a role in which her leadership qualities truly shine. As village lead, she is the heart of her team, guiding colleagues through lesson planning, modeling effective instructional strategies, and providing support to teachers who are new to the profession or seeking assistance. She does this with patience, empathy, and a genuine desire to see everyone succeed. Jennifer's leadership is never about authority—it is about care, collaboration, and lifting others up. She takes the time to understand the strengths and challenges of each teacher, offering practical guidance while encouraging professional growth. New teachers often rely on her for mentorship, knowing she will provide honest feedback while maintaining respect and encouragement. Experienced teachers value her insight and collaborative approach, knowing she always has the best interests of students at the center of every decision. Her dedication to her colleagues mirrors the dedication she shows her students. Jennifer believes that a strong, supported teaching team is the foundation of student success. She works tirelessly to ensure that both her team and her students have the guidance, resources, and encouragement they need to thrive. Her passion for education, her unwavering commitment to excellence, and her care for everyone in her village make her not only an exceptional teacher but also an inspiring leader who transforms her school community every day.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 79

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Kathryn Fleming

Position: Grades 4 and 5 Autistic Support 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: 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.**

Kate has been a teacher in special education for the past 10 years. She started her career at Elwyn's Davidson School in Media, PA where she taught in the Early Intervention/Early Learning program. The program consisted of students ages 3-7 with multiple disabilities and autism. After 5 years at Davidson School, Kate took a job with Chichester School District where she taught special education in their life skills, learning support and autistic support program. In 2024, Kate joined the Special Education team at Culbertson Elementary in Marple Newtown School District where she currently works. Kate received her bachelor's degree in education at West Chester University and has a master's degree in Reading Education from that university. She continues to acquire continuing credits and work toward her professional development.

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

Kate provides a secure structured learning environment, which is designed to address the specific individual needs of her students. The design and execution of this structure is such that it includes careful consideration of each student's needs to incorporate into

a learning environment for everyone in the class. There are many moving pieces to this structure and its use. Kate assesses each student and plans for them individually within the overall structure. She relies on her knowledge of their skills as well as keen observations of their performance and responses to each learning activity. Kate treats each student with the same general expectations of the classroom but is flexible in guiding each student in a way they understand and to which they can relate. As an example, Kate was working with a student who, when presented with a task, procrastinated in completing it. At the end of the work session, the student was not finished and wanted to complete it at another time. Kate carefully and purposefully needed to create a learning moment for this student, to help him understand that he was required to follow the structure of the schedule presented and not his own. While she denied the student an extension of completing his work when he wanted to, she designed strategies to have him complete his work per his schedule in the school day. Over several learning moments like this, the student gradually came to understand that he should/could complete his work at the time presented. In another example, Kate anticipated that a student would become distressed in a large group school setting in the cafeteria and would likely act out or become disruptive. She adapted the activity for the student, presenting him with a scheduled break from the setting by completing a functional task outside of the auditorium. Kate developed an appropriate way to address the needs of this student.

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.

Kate developed skills in collaborative and team-teaching models throughout all her school placements. This led to the development of a professional and personal relationship between Kate and one of her colleagues, through several years of teaching together. Their friendship set the stage for unique opportunities to work together to develop strategies for all their students, interchanging them across activities. As an example, Kate and her colleague developed what they called 'flexible grouping', pairing students from their two classes per their skill levels and interests, to promote extended learning activities with others. It also provided opportunities for students to interact with more than one teacher throughout the day and to develop learning relationships with both students and teachers. In developing 'flexible grouping', Kate and her colleague planned curricular activities together and placed individualized approaches to students through shared activities. Sadly, this colleague passed away unexpectedly early in the present school year. While this was a blow to the staff, Kate was affected both personally and professionally. While dealing with the grief of losing a dear friend, Kate

has taken it upon herself to continue to plan for students to pair/group across classes and continues to address their learning needs through developing IEPs and meeting with parents of students in her colleague's class. She does this in addition to attending to her own students' needs, because of the commitment to the success Kate and her colleague found in their 'flexible grouping' practice. Kate has been recognized by her peers for her ability to work with others and to incorporate into her classroom curriculum strategies, activities to address needs across developmental areas

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

Kate sets a good example for her students by modeling expectations such as being hard working, honest and empathetic. She is respectful of students' ability and communicates at a level that correlates with learning needs. She demonstrates active listening and promotes a supportive classroom where everyone feels safe to learn and grow. She personally interacts with each of her students in a way that addresses their individual needs, learning style, and communication needs. For example, a student was having a hard time making friends with a specific peer. The student approached Kate, expressed frustration, and asked for guidance on how to connect with the peer. Kate brainstormed with her student and advised her to approach her peer with topics of similar interest. In addition, she addressed issues with relationships so that the student can better understand that relationships don't always occur in the way we expect them too.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 80

Application 2 of 4 for Maureen Mylotte

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: Shelley Bolinger

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.**

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 (Currently)

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

When talking about Highland Park Elementary School, two names always recur in conversations: principal Joanne DeVito and Maureen Mylotte. Maureen is the backbone of Highland Park and she is involved in almost every aspect of the daily happenings at Highland Park. She is one of the first ones to arrive in the morning, one of the last to leave, and travels quite a distance to get to work. Her dedication to our staff and students is remarkable. She tirelessly works to see that students are engaged, learning,

working hard, celebrating, dancing, singing, following the five B's and representing Highland Park well. She does this through PBIS incentives, Student of the Month assemblies, special events, mentoring and her daily happiness and positivity around the school. Her co-workers enjoy Sunshine events, holiday parties, Friday breakfasts and many other wonderful events and happenings that are created and organized by Maureen. In addition, she is well trained and educated as a reading specialist and excels in her position. She is team leader for the reading team of eight and also coordinates SST meetings for students struggling. Her energy is endless and I always find myself asking, "How does she do it all?"

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 someone everyone goes to for advice or support and she is always willing to take time to listen. She is also an expert in her field and motivates her students to find the joy in reading and excel in their learning. As the reading team leader, her peers look to her for reading instruction strategies and interventions and clarification on data points and progress monitoring. Just recently, a new data program was introduced to our school by administration and Maureen is the person many of the teachers seek out for clarification and understanding of the new program. In addition, Maureen mentors students who are in need of emotional support and she mentors new teachers who are in need of instructional support. Her dedication to her craft, students and fellow teachers keeps the heartbeat of the school running smoothly and fluidly.

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

Maureen is the leader of our PBIS team and creates and organizes so many positive behavior incentives and rewards. Our school promotes following the 5B's (Be safe, be respectful, be responsible, be kind, be royal) and Maureen promotes these daily when she delivers our morning announcements and every Friday afternoon when she announces winners of our "Cool to be Kind" and "Golden Ticket" incentives. In addition, she spearheads our Student of the Month Assembly, which takes place every first Wednesday of the month. She puts so much time and effort into creating an amazing celebration of goodness and achievement to recognize outstanding student behavior. She even adds staff incentives and prizes and has just recently introduced the GOAT award for students and staff who have gone above and beyond.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 81

Application 3 of 4 for Maureen Mylotte

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Maureen Mylotte

Position: Reading Specialist

School: Highland Park Elementary

School District if applicable: Upper Darby School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Dena Rene Koser-Hanna

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.**

Maureen Mylotte has been teaching at Highland Park Elementary School in the Upper Darby School District for nearly 30 years. She's held several positions including 1st grade teacher, Lead teacher, Literacy Coach, and Reading Specialist. Additionally, she serves on the school's Student Support Team, PBIS committee, as well as the Tier II Behavioral Support team. Each school year, Mrs. Mylotte has volunteered her time to mentor students in the school's Staff-Student mentoring program. She is active in the school climate committee & safety team. Further, she founded the faculty HP Dance team, as well as created a similar program for students to perform at monthly Student of the Month assemblies which she emcees.

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

Mrs. Mylotte is ALWAYS positive and respectful in working with the students & staff! She has a wonderful sense of humor & is often seen in the hallways laughing and smiling with many students. She volunteers to work directly with students who need additional

emotional/social supports. Each month, Mrs. Mylotte masterfully emceeds the Student of the Month Assemblies. She garners the quiet attention of 750 students & 85 staff~no small feat! She dresses up for each occasion & has special activities & prizes for the children. Mrs Mylotte makes each assembly a special & memorable occasion!

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. Mylotte has been child-centered for her entire educational career. As an experienced teacher & coach, she is extremely knowledgeable & credible when advocating for additional supports. Her presentation is always respectful with sprinkles of humor & a hardy laugh. She is a member of the Reading team at Highland Park and leads the group in weekly data review meetings. Mrs. Mylotte also creates the finest bulletin boards highlighting the students' activities & achievements. Mrs. Mylotte does the morning announcements with wit & positivity! She recently created a weekly attendance incentive called HOT (Here & On Time). The classroom with the best overall attendance receives a Friday morning dance party that she, the principal, and staff lead the fun celebration. Her dance moves & overall positivity sets the tone for a great day!

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

Each and every day, Mrs. Mylotte leads with respect & positivity, which is contagious! Staff look up to her. She is the first to identify needs of a student & effectively creates a supportive network. She uses humor so wonderfully in connecting & supporting the children. Family members have raved about her involvement, especially in assisting with specific reading skills. Overall, Maureen Mylotte is a total gem! She works tirelessly to connect with the students at Highland Park Elementary School~she makes HP a great place to be!

APPLICATION NUMBER: 82

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Jen McDougall

Position: 5th grade teacher

School: Ithan

School District if applicable: Radnor

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Alyson McBride

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.**

5th grade teacher - I am a parent so I am not sure about Mrs. McDougall's CV!

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

5th grade is a pivotal year and my daughter was having a challenging time with boys bullying her. She set the tone in her classroom for how students should be treated and she has not wavered once. She checks in with my daughter and me to ensure her emotional wellbeing. She is empathetic at the same time as being one of the most structured teachers we have had. She pushes the kids educationally, but to be their best selves and she doesn't let anyone settle for less. F

- 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 parent, I don't always see how teachers work with one another. But I do see how Mrs. McDougall encourages my child. My 5th grader decided she was interested in Anne Boylan, so Mrs. McDougall encouraged her to write a fictional story, type it up and to

research Tudor history. She makes my child excited about learning and encourages her to learn about topics that interest her and goes above and beyond the regular 5th grade curriculum. She learns what the students are interested in and gives them resources to take it a step further.

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

Mrs. McDougall is unapologetically herself and she encourages her students to do the same. She highlights people's differences as strengths and encourages the kids to love what they love and to be proud of that. One of the students was recently diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and Mrs. McDougall helped organize an awareness day for the whole school. Everyone wore blue and she helped make that student feel special instead of different. She allows everyone to share and be themselves at a time when the 5th graders are unsure about who they are.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 83

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Melissa Tracy

Position: Teacher

School: Odyssey Charter High School

School District if applicable: Odyssey Charter School

County of School: New Castle County

Grade Level: High School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Marie Humphrey

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.**

Melissa has been teaching at Odyssey for over 12 years. She has been involved with the Food Science pathway for most of that time. She started as a middle school teacher, but quickly moved to high school, when our it opened in 2018. She is responsible for creating an urban farm program that includes live stock, 20 raised garden bed that produces about 2000 pounds of fresh produce a year and this year our pantry program. She is working on her Fellowship in Food Science.

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

Melissa is our Food Science teacher, who runs a fully functioning CTE curriculum. She advises our work-based learning students as they run our school community food pantry. Melissa shared a vision of supplying a fully functional food pantry to meet the needs of our students who are eligible for food assistance. To this end, she has garnered grants that supply food on a weekly basis from the Food Bank of Delaware. She sought out and applied for a fresh produce partnership with a Philadelphia based produce company that supplies free fresh produce to our families that would not be able to

afford fresh produce otherwise. She organizes and supervises our student based growing garden and our fully functioning hydroponics lab. As the teacher and advisor for the Food Service program, she teaches students sustainability, the science of food, nutritional needs as well as life style adaptations for healthy living. As the Food Pantry advisor, she helps students maintain stock, create an environment that is warm and non-threatening for our patrons, product selection for our gardens, and upkeep of our hydroponics lab. Her students work closely with her to learn the steps it takes to be the administrator of the program. She has a group of students that she meets with bi-weekly, with whom she coordinates and contributes to the decisions they make. She mentors- and lets students struggle enough to learn that one 'bump in the road' can be a learning experience.

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 works closely with the staff of our high school as she coordinates opportunities for our staff to be involved in the upkeep and operation of our pantry program. She coordinates 6 opportunities throughout the year for staff to help run the pantry, make purchases for our various themed events (Thanksgiving, Winter Holiday meals, Back to School events, Spring Break Food Boxes as examples). She writes weekly updates for our staff newsletter that recognizes volunteers and encourages participation, as well as working with our counselors for grief and special circumstance situations in an emergency. Melissa knows no strangers in need. She perseveres in her willingness to help student families as well as staff members who are currently enduring situations that have placed them in need. All while maintaining the privacy of those she is assisting. Melissa and I have been managing the food pantry since its inception. I support her efforts and know first hand the paperwork, grant writing, and course prep that goes into maintaining this program. I work with her during open pantry hours, but her dedication goes much further. Without her unwaivering support of the programs which she runs, the pantry, hydroponics lab and food services program would be non-existent as it stands today.

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

By modeling empathy for less fortunate, Melissa is teaching students how to share their gifts and talents in order to help their peers who are struggling. Many situations occur that our students know before the staff does. These students know that Melissa will find

a way to help their friends. Specific examples are privacy violations, but I have seen Melissa find clothing and food resources for students whose homes have been damaged by fires, for students who have parental custody battles that make it difficult for the student to secure food, give coats and food to single parents who just can't make payments for their home and supply general necessities for their children. Keep in mind this is all while teaching food science classes and maintaining the Pantry. Her ability to multi-task is beyond expectations. Her ability to find, prepare and be awarded grants that have allowed our food garden to quadruple in size this past year is 'magical'. This is modeling to our student population, our business pathway students, our agricultural team as well as our student government what it means to be 'community based'.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 84

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Lindsay Carney
Position: Kindergarten Teacher
School: Manoa Elementary School
School District if applicable: Haverford
County of School: Delaware County
Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Shannon Diminick
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. Carney holds a Bachelor's degree in Speech Language Pathology from The Pennsylvania State University and a Master's degree in Elementary Education with certification in Special Education from Saint Joseph's University. While I do not know the full scope of her years of teaching, certifications, or formal awards, I suspect that is largely due to Mrs. Carney's humble nature and her consistent focus on her students rather than on self-promotion. In our experience, Mrs. Carney has never led with her credentials or accomplishments. Instead, she leads with compassion, professionalism, and an unwavering commitment to her classroom community. While I would not be surprised to learn that she has received numerous accolades and glowing recognition throughout her career, what stands out most to our family is the impact she has had on our child and on us as parents. Although formal achievements are important, I hope the review committee will weigh heavily the lived experience of families like ours who have directly benefited from Mrs. Carney's exceptional teaching, kindness, and dedication. The influence she has on her students extends far beyond what can be listed on a résumé, and it is that daily excellence — quiet, consistent, and deeply meaningful — that makes her so deserving of this nomination.

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

A few months into last school year, our family experienced an unexpected and urgent relocation from SC to PA after our youngest son received a serious medical diagnosis requiring frequent, life-saving care at CHOP. In the midst of this upheaval, our older son was abruptly uprooted from his home, school, friends, and routines and was bravely facing a new town, a new school, and a new classroom. We were incredibly fortunate that he was placed in Mrs. Carney's kindergarten class at Manoa Elementary. What initially felt like a chance assignment quickly became the most positive and life-changing part of our move. From the very beginning, Mrs. Carney met our family with kindness, empathy, and genuine understanding. Despite already teaching more than twenty students, she intentionally created space for our son to feel welcomed, safe, and known. Before his first official day, she invited him to join the class during a school walk-through and thoughtfully prepared a personalized basket of familiar books to help him feel at home. Mrs. Carney was exceptionally attuned to our son's emotional and academic needs. She took the time to truly know him and quickly recognized his advanced learning and reading abilities. She proactively reached out with thoughtful observations and clear recommendations, guiding and supporting us through the process of having him evaluated and enrolled in a gifted program. Her encouragement, communication, and advocacy were invaluable as we navigated a new school system during an already overwhelming season. While we would have been grateful simply for a teacher who showed up each day and cared for her students, Mrs. Carney went far beyond that. Her actions demonstrated a deep investment in the whole child — academically, emotionally, and personally. Because of her attentiveness and dedication, our son has been able to access learning paths that continue to challenge and inspire him, fueling his love of reading, learning, and school. Even now, our son regularly seeks out Mrs. Carney for a visit and a "Mrs. Carney hug," a testament to the lasting sense of safety and belonging she created during one of the most difficult times of our 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.

As a parent, I do not regularly witness the day-to-day professional collaboration that takes place behind the scenes in a school. However, through our family's experience, it is clear that Mrs. Carney works intentionally and effectively alongside her colleagues to support student growth and excellence in the classroom. One meaningful example was her role in initiating and coordinating the process for our son to be evaluated for gifted

programming. Recognizing his advanced learning needs, Mrs. Carney took it upon herself to connect with the appropriate specialists and staff members — a process we, as new parents to the district, would not have known how to navigate on our own. She communicated clearly and consistently with us, providing updates and guidance as each step progressed. This effort required collaboration across roles and departments and added "extra" work to an already full teaching load, yet Mrs. Carney approached it with professionalism, urgency, and care. What stood out most was her willingness to advocate for a single student while working within a larger team to ensure the process was handled thoughtfully and efficiently. Her actions reflected a deep respect for her colleagues' expertise and a shared commitment to doing what was best for the child. If Mrs. Carney is willing to invest this level of time, coordination, and collaboration for one student, I am confident this same dedication extends to her work with fellow teachers, specialists, and staff on behalf of all the students in her care. While much of this work understandably happens behind the scenes, our experience provides a powerful glimpse into the collaborative spirit, leadership, and professionalism Mrs. Carney brings to the Manoa Elementary community each day!

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

Mrs. Carney is a powerful role model to our son and to every student at Manoa Elementary because of the constant and consistent kindness, inclusion, and care she shows to every child. During parent visits to the classroom, I have had the opportunity to see her teaching in action and to witness the energy and enthusiasm she brings to her work each day. She teaches with warmth and personality, creating an environment where students feel excited to learn and confident in themselves. Mrs. Carney is intentional about inclusion, ensuring that no child is left out, overlooked, or left to navigate challenges alone. Her classroom reflects a culture of belonging, where differences are respected and every student feels valued. Through her words and actions, she models empathy, patience, and respect — qualities that are foundational not only to learning, but to becoming a good human being. She also serves as a role model by demonstrating a genuine passion for learning. Her excitement is contagious, showing students that curiosity, effort, and growth are things to be celebrated. Our son often speaks about school with joy and enthusiasm, a direct reflection of the positive learning environment Mrs. Carney creates. While the academic experience our family has had at Manoa has been exceptional, what we most hope our son gains from this

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

community is the confidence that kindness matters above all else. Mrs. Carney exemplifies this value every day. She leads by example, showing children that kindness, empathy, and care for others are strengths to be proud of. We are deeply grateful that our son has such an incredible role model during these formative years.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 85

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Dominique Kornafel
Position: 4th Grade Teacher
School: Walnut Street Elementary
School District if applicable: William Penn
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. Kornafel has been a teacher at Walnut Street Elementary School for 5 years serving 3rd and 4th grade students. Prior to Walnut, she served as a teacher at Park Lane Elementary School for a combined total of 6 years in the William Penn School District. She has been nominated for several local and national awards as recognition for her great work with her students. Fifty percent of her fourth grade math students increased their PSSA proficiency levels during the 2024-2025 school year. She worked in raising PSSA science scores from 20% to 56% during the 2023-2024 school year which was the highest scores Walnut students have received. She is currently working on her administration degree with a desire to lead her own school one day.

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

Mrs. Kornafel leads with a strong heart. She wants the best for her students and provides consistent structure to ensure they are in a position to be successful. She ensures that her students are provided opportunities to participate in activities outside of the classroom by planning field trips and activities to extend their learning. The

significance of this action resonates with the students in her class and ensures that she recognizes the importance of connections made outside of school. Students are very excited to discuss experiences and she holds them accountable by having them journal and make classroom curriculum connections. Mrs. Kornafel, without hesitation, will provide resources for her students to ensure they have what they need to be successful. These resources run the gamut from instructional items to clothing and even transportation on occasion. Mrs. Kornafel is in charge of our weekly afterschool detention. It's primary purpose was designed to reinforce positive and accountable behaviors. Mrs. Kornafel has blended this responsibility into a study hall. During this time, in addition to holding students accountable, she also supports their need for academic support providing a safe space for students to finish assignments when completing them at home becomes challenging.

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 young teacher Mrs. Kornafel seeks out ways to improve her craft consistently. She concentrates her efforts on becoming a better educator. Her classroom now serves as a model for others. New and veteran teachers are invited to view her instructional environment and her delivery of instruction. She collaborates with her colleagues and shares effective strategies that have taken off in other classrooms. Students are aware of their progress and success at all times. The feedback she provides is amazing. When I enter her classroom, students are excited to share the wonderful things they are doing, showing me work, notebooks and other various artifacts of learning. I recall one student being so proud of herself, she hugged me but gave all of the credit to Mrs. Kornafel. Mrs. Kornafel works very closely with her grade partner to ensure students are receiving what the need. She models methods of parent communication that other teachers have adopted. Daily contacts with parents are essential to her work with students. Other staff members have adopted her methods. Mrs. Kornafel recently secured CPR training for our building. This was instrumental because our students attend lots of field trips where a nurse may not be available. That additional safety training brought a level of comfort to our staff empowering them to be able to support students in an emergency. In addition, she supports her colleagues as a Union representative, providing guidance on issues that helps them manage their job responsibilities effectively.

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

Mrs. Kornafel provides consistent structure and support to her students. Her classroom is highly organized and her routines provide comfort to students so they know what to expect each and every day. They trust her. Mrs. Kornafel provides social emotional learning instruction daily and models her expectations. She equips students with strategies to manage challenges they encounter. I see her efforts in practice by her students during daily lunch duty. In one instance, there was a student disagreement and I heard one student say, "What would Mrs. Kornafel do?". They quickly resolved their issue. I was truly impressed. She holds students accountable behaviorally and academically and reinforces her expectations consistently. She speaks to students with respect and dignity clearly articulating what needs to be done to be successful. The stern looks, reminders and hugs all contribute to positive student teacher interactions. The students love Mrs. Kornafel.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 86

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Olivia Chase

Position: Long Term Substitute

School: Harvey Sabold Elementary School

School District if applicable: Springfield

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Kimberly Chase

Your relationship to the Nominee: Mother

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.**

Olivia attended Albright Univ. and DCCC for her teaching journey. She has taught 1-5th grades in Phonics, ELA, Math, Social Studies/Science and Social skills. She has been teaching for 6 years and everyone just loves her! Her certifications include: Early Grades Preparation, PreK-4th, Special Ed PreK-8th and in May 2026 she will receive her certification as a Reading Specialist.

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

Everywhere we go, Olivia is always shopping and thinking about the KIDS! She is always spending her money out-of-pocket to better her students experiences whether it be Holiday or just a weekday pick me up! They are always on her mind! She wants to better the Behavioral incentives , lessons and technology wherever she can.

- 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.**

Olivia's positivity has inspired many of her friends to pursue a career in Teaching. That specific individual went from a Building Aid, to wanting more due to Olivia's encouragement and friendship!

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

Olivia is a Role Model because she is truly Selfless! She is an advocate for getting children the additional support they need in school and LIFE! She is a great judge of character and sees things in children that helps to elevate their progress in school and well being as citizens. God Bless our Teachers!

APPLICATION NUMBER: 87

Application 2 of 2 for Todd Serpico

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Todd Serpico

Position: 5th Grade Teacher

School: Radnor Elementary School

School District if applicable: Radnor Township School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Nancy Young

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.**

Todd Serpico is a Pennsylvania-certified educator with over 25 years of classroom experience. He earned a double major in Elementary Education and Special Education from Saint Joseph's University, where he also served as a Graduate Assistant. He holds a Master's degree in Education, Reading Specialist certification, and an Elementary Principal Certification from Eastern University. Additionally, he was recognized as a Writing Fellow in Elementary Education and Teaching at West Chester University. Todd's career includes teaching third grade at Garnet Valley Elementary School (2001–2006) and fifth grade at Radnor Elementary School since 2006. Since 2021, he has also served as an adjunct professor at Eastern University, teaching preservice educators in Child and Adolescent Development.

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

Todd Serpico consistently goes above and beyond to support his students academically, socially, and emotionally. His classroom combines high intellectual expectations, strong

relationships, and personal growth. He extends support well beyond the school day—attending students' sporting events, even out of town, to show that their lives outside the classroom matter. He also makes individualized connections, calling families in the evenings when a student's needs or classroom dynamics shift. Students consistently report that Todd makes learning engaging while encouraging them to strive for their best. His commitment yields measurable results: his classes have earned statewide recognition in the Citizenship Challenge essay competition (third place in 2015–2016 and second place in 2024–2025). In addition, Todd consistently exceeds expectations on continuous growth measures, as evidenced by extensive and well-documented data collection. His use of formative and summative assessments allows him to monitor progress closely, adjust instruction responsively, and ensure sustained growth for all learners. One story that illustrates Todd's extraordinary impact is his unwavering commitment to inclusion and community. Radnor Elementary School recently celebrated two students selected as finalists in an essay contest at the Rendell Center. Under Todd's leadership and through the work of his remarkable Team 19, the project became a true fifth-grade collaboration. Students contributed original writing, choreography, props, costumes, and skits, each bringing their unique strengths to a shared vision. The depth of creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration was extraordinary. Todd may never speak about the significance of this work, but it deserves recognition. Radnor is often seen as a high-achieving district, yet many students quietly navigate trauma, poverty, learning differences, and other challenges. At the finals, students who face these barriers daily stood confidently before distinguished leaders, including our former governor, a federal judge, and respected community members. They demonstrated poise, resilience, and teamwork—not seeking personal recognition, but contributing to something larger than themselves. Watching these students regulate their emotions, step back to support peers, and embrace their roles in the group brought tears to my eyes. These moments reflect growth beyond academics and speak to Todd Serpico's impact: creating spaces where students feel valued, capable, and empowered.

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.

Todd is a powerful role model, demonstrating responsibility, dedication, balance, and lifelong learning. He arrives early to prepare thoughtfully, consistently wears a tie to signal pride in his work, and models reflection by inviting former students to share lessons learned. His experience as a parent, small business owner, and youth coach allows him to demonstrate perseverance, thoughtful risk-taking, and community

engagement—lessons that resonate with his students. Todd contributes widely to the school community, fostering excellence in others' classrooms through collaboration, mentoring, and shared leadership. He participates in curriculum reviews, pilots new district resources, and leads professional learning sessions. Fellow teachers describe him as supportive, innovative, and inspiring, bringing warmth, humor, and insight to collaborative work. His influence extends beyond Radnor Elementary, including leadership in district-wide programs such as the fifth-grade community camping event and other county-level youth initiatives. This year, he also supported a group of younger teachers struggling to navigate technology resources—federally required, instructional, and data tools. On his own time, Todd arranged a personal learning community, working through scenarios collaboratively. By the end, the group produced a user-friendly manual for new teachers, growing capacity and empowering colleagues to use resources confidently. It is also important for me to share that as principal, Todd has also guided staff through work focused on dignity, helping our team examine our core values and navigate a systematic process to strengthen collaboration. In a time in our world where differences of opinions is defined as conflict, he models the value of collegial discourse, showing that thoughtful conversations do not signal unfair treatment but strengthen teams through diverse perspectives. He keeps the group moving, serving as a supportive partner to me as principal, helping us stay focused on doing what is right for students and keeping our work aligned with our true north.

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

Todd Serpico is an exceptional role model for students, not only through his dedication and character but also through the way he models the thinking process itself. Drawing on the research of John Hattie in *Visible Learning* and the framework of *Habits of Mind*, Todd demonstrates to students how to approach learning intentionally and reflectively. He shows them that at any stage—academically or in life—the critical question is: Where am I going? He helps students understand the purpose of their learning, identify their current level of understanding, and recognize the gap between their performance and the intended goal. Todd models how to use feedback as a continuous loop. He guides students to interpret feedback meaningfully, ask what specific actions are needed to close the gap, and take deliberate steps to improve. Importantly, he demonstrates how to monitor progress along the way, helping learners develop self-assessment skills and independent strategies to measure their growth. This approach equips students to evaluate their own performance relative to goals, fostering both

accountability and agency in their learning. He also varies the type of feedback he provides, ensuring it is not only corrective but instructive. Feedback communicates what is understood and what is not, offers strategies students can apply immediately, and provides transferable skills that extend beyond the classroom. Through this practice, Todd helps students build fluency and automaticity, preparing them to approach new challenges with confidence and resilience. By consistently modeling this thinking and feedback process, Todd teaches students more than content—he teaches how to think, reflect, and act strategically. He cultivates learners who understand that improvement is iterative, that effort is purposeful, and that success requires both reflection and action. In doing so, he instills in his students the mindset, habits, and skills necessary to navigate both academic challenges and the complexities of life beyond school.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 88

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Krista Magdy

Position: 2nd Grade Teacher

School: Chestnutwold Elementary

School District if applicable: Haverford School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Elizabeth Hoffmann

Your relationship to the Nominee: Parent of current 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.**

Krista Magdy has been a dedicated employee of the Haverford School District since 2002. She is a trained level 1 and level 2 Responsive Classroom facilitator. She is the Chair of the BINGO Committee- the largest teacher-led fundraiser at the school. Money earned goes to fund the 5th grade Mary Borman Award as well as a pertinent Charity/Need for the year. She began her teaching at Oakmont School, where she supported students both before and throughout the construction of the district's new elementary school in Ardmore, Chestnutwold Elementary. For more than 20 years, she has served as a second-grade teacher at Chestnutwold Elementary, demonstrating a sustained commitment to educational excellence and student development.

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

I witnessed Krista Magdy's dedication to her students firsthand while volunteering at a PTO-led event in her classroom. The classroom environment was calm, structured, and highly engaged in the project at hand. She was consistently attentive to students who required additional support and guidance. When a student requested to use the

restroom, Mrs. Magdy took the opportunity to provide thoughtful coaching on appropriate behaviors to practice while traveling to and from the classroom. Throughout my time with her, she demonstrated a warm, patient, and nurturing demeanor. It was evident that her students held ample respect for her and were motivated to meet her expectations.

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. Magdy is a dedicated and tireless advocate for families at Chestnutwold Elementary. She consistently collaborates with the principal, guidance counselors, case managers, and other administrators to ensure that learning plans are aligned and that each student's needs are fully supported. One parent shared that when her daughter was struggling at home, Mrs. Magdy took the initiative to create a daily communication log, providing the family with clear guidance and consistent updates throughout the week. Through Mrs. Magdy's ongoing support and advocacy, this family is now developing a comprehensive and effective IEP, setting the student up for continued success as she progresses to future grade levels. The principal shared that she collaborates with colleagues regularly and is a leader in the building. As a member of many district-wide committees, her work directly impacts teachers across the district and improves instruction for students.

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

Mrs. Magdy's enthusiasm for math has had a profound influence on her students, serving as a powerful example of how passion for learning can inspire others. Through her engaging and joyful approach to instruction, she models curiosity, confidence, and a positive attitude toward challenges. During a recent Thanksgiving reflection activity, students were asked to share why they were thankful for Mrs. Magdy. Many shared that math had become their favorite subject because of the excitement and encouragement she brings to the classroom, demonstrating the lasting impact she has as both an educator and a role model.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 89

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Nicole Henderson

Position: 5th grade teacher

School: Bethel Springs Elementary School

School District if applicable: Garnet Valley

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Lynn Cashell

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.**

Nicole is a master's level educator with 27 years teaching 5th grade in elementary schools. She teaches all subjects: ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. She is the 5th grade team leader, a role she embraces and takes very seriously.

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

Nicole works tirelessly to provide the best learning environment for her students. She often has students with special learning and/or emotional needs in her classroom. I know that Nicole seeks out resources online, in books, and from colleagues in order to best support her diverse population of student needs. Nicole can often be seen over our lunch break working with a student in need. She communicates with parents often and uses the resources of our guidance counselor, special education teachers, instructional coaches, and reading specialists to hone her craft. When she had a student last year who was wheelchair bound and non-verbal, she worked tirelessly with the special education teacher and his paraprofessional to be as inclusive as possible in 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.

Nicole is the team leader for our 5th grade team. In addition to being incredibly organized, she shares pertinent information in a timely manner to her colleagues, ensures that we are consistently working together towards our common goals, and finds supporting materials to extend and enrich our teaching. Nicole often co-teaches with either a reading specialist or special education teacher depending upon the configuration of her classroom. I have only heard positive things about how she nurtures that relationship in order to deliver the best education to their students.

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

Nicole is the only black educator in our building. She takes great pride in being a good role model not only for our black students, but for all students, recognizing and honoring their diversity. She is extremely sensitive to how some cultural issues may "land on" students in our differing cultures. For example, in social studies, we had a unit on slavery. One of the projects was to create illustrations for each of the sections in the chapter in our book. Some students drew images of slavery that were very detailed based on what they read. Nicole was concerned about how those images might have effected some of our students. She offered me a perspective that I had not considered and opened my eyes to some of our own cultural blindness. In the same vein, she shared a story about students in her class attempting to pronounce names that were of Chinese origin in one of our stories. While the students were not consciously being disrespectful, Nicole noticed one of her students of Chinese descent becoming withdrawn. She stopped the discussion and used that time to talk about cultural differences and how we impact others sometimes in negative ways when not necessarily intentional.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 90

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Kristen Rutecki

Position: 3rd Grade Teacher

School: Pennell Elementary School

School District if applicable: Penn-Delco School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Jessica Mooney

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.**

Miss Rutecki is a dedicated and highly qualified educator with a strong academic and professional background in elementary education. She is currently in her third year of teaching at Pennell and brings both passion and expertise to her classroom. She earned her degree in Elementary Education and English as a Second Language from the University of Delaware and later returned to obtain her Master's Degree in Special Education. In addition to her advanced degrees, Miss Rutecki continues to grow professionally by taking graduate-level courses at Immaculata to further enhance her teaching and support diverse learners. Her commitment to ongoing education reflects her deep dedication to meeting the needs of all students and providing the best possible learning experience.

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

Miss Rutecki has made a truly meaningful difference in my son's school experience and in our family's life. She goes above and beyond each day to ensure he feels supported, understood, and capable of success. By providing thoughtful accommodations

throughout the school day, she meets my son exactly where he is and helps him grow with confidence rather than frustration. Because of her, school is a place where he feels safe, encouraged, and valued. What sets Miss Rutecki apart even further is the care she shows beyond the classroom. She checks in with me almost daily by phone, taking the time to share updates, celebrate progress, and work through challenges together. This level of communication has built an incredible sense of trust and has given me reassurance that my son is not just another student, but someone who truly matters to her. Miss Rutecki's dedication extends well beyond the school day. She regularly attends school events and functions outside of normal hours simply to be there for her students. Her presence sends a powerful message that she genuinely cares, and that kind of commitment leaves a lasting impact. Miss Rutecki teaches with her whole heart, and her compassion, advocacy, and unwavering support make her exceptionally deserving of this award.

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 Rutecki is a true team player who works closely with her colleagues to create a supportive and enriching environment for her students. One meaningful example of this is her involvement in the Girls on the Run program, where she volunteers her time alongside other teachers outside of the regular school day. Through this program, she collaborates with fellow educators to promote confidence, teamwork, and perseverance, reinforcing the same values she models in her classroom. Her willingness to give her time and energy in partnership with her peers speaks volumes about her dedication to students and to the school community as a whole. By working together with other teachers in programs like Girls on the Run, Miss Rutecki helps create a consistent, positive culture that extends beyond academics and into students' personal growth and well-being. Miss Rutecki's collaborative spirit, generosity with her time, and commitment to working alongside her peers elevate not only her own classroom, but the entire school environment. Her actions reflect a deep belief that excellence in education is built through teamwork, shared purpose, and genuine care for students.

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

Miss Rutecki is an exceptional role model to her students through the compassion, dedication, and integrity she demonstrates every day. She models empathy by taking the time to understand each child's individual needs and by showing patience and

kindness in every interaction. For my son, seeing an adult consistently advocate for him, support him, and believe in him has taught him the importance of perseverance and self-confidence. She also models responsibility and commitment through her actions. Miss Rutecki frequently gives her time beyond the school day—whether by attending school events or volunteering alongside colleagues in programs like Girls on the Run. Her willingness to show up for her students sends a powerful message about teamwork, leadership, and caring for others. Most importantly, Miss Rutecki models what it means to treat others with respect and compassion. She teaches her students not only academic skills, but life lessons about kindness, inclusion, and resilience. The example she sets leaves a lasting impression on her students, and my son looks up to her as someone who genuinely cares and leads by example. For these reasons, Miss Rutecki is an outstanding role model and a teacher who truly shapes lives.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 91

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Rachel Pearson

Position: Rachel Pearson

School: Bancroft Elementary School

School District if applicable: Kennett Consolidated School District

County of School: Chester County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Lynsey Glbbons

Your relationship to the Nominee: Parent at school where nominee teaches

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.**

Rachel Pearson received her bachelor's degree from West Chester University in elementary education. She has been teaching for 11 years, and has been teaching at Bancroft Elementary School in Kennett Consolidated School since 2017.

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

The hallmark of a good teacher is the ability to truly see each student – recognizing their individual strengths, needs, interests, and potential – and to use that understanding to design learning experiences that help each child grow with confidence and joy. Ms. Rachel Pearson is the embodiment of this approach. She goes above and beyond for her students in ways that are both deeply personal and professionally exceptional. Building on her strong understanding of third-grade content, she takes an intentional, individualized approach to supporting each child in her classroom. Ms. Pearson consistently goes above and beyond by prioritizing a deep understanding of her students as individual learners and people. She differentiates instruction, shaping grade-level standards to meet the needs, strengths, and readiness levels of each child.

She actively shapes the curriculum to those individuals, demonstrating that differentiating instruction is far more sophisticated than simply "adjusting lessons". She consistently seeks to understand students' interests outside of the school setting so that she can design individual curriculum tailored for their learning. This responsiveness ensures she can deliver the right amount of support while maintaining high expectations. Her students feel seen, challenged, and supported because she listens to their ideas, asks for their opinions, and adjusts her teaching in real time. She creates a classroom environment filled with warmth, energy, and belonging. It is a singular gift to be able to deliver learner level appropriate instruction in an individual manner and in this Ms. Rachel Pearson is a singular talent.

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. Pearson actively facilitates excellence among her peers primarily through her role as a dedicated mentor. She mentors student teachers and contributes to the professional growth of new educators. For example, the student teacher she mentored last year, Mr. Will, went on to receive his desired job near his hometown in Virginia, a testament to the guidance, professionalism, and high expectations she brings to mentorship. Her commitment to mentorship and exemplification of a growth mindset in the profession is visible even outside of educational settings. On a Saturday morning, she modeled her excellence in education by bringing Mr. Will, the student teacher, to a little league baseball game in which multiple parents and students participated. As numerous of her nine-year-olds streamed out of the both dugouts to greet her with joy, it was clear how deeply she is valued. Her example, and intentional inclusion of her student teacher, was meant to both display her joy in connecting with her students outside the classroom and provide an example of impact a teacher can have on the life of her students. Her professionalism and reflective practice are aspirational for the field, demonstrating a continuous pursuit of excellence in her craft. Furthermore, she collaborates extensively with families, which is a core quality of effective teaching, as parents noted she was very communicative and willing to work with them on new ideas.

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

Ms. Pearson is a role model to her students through her exceptional personal qualities and her professional embodiment of lifelong learning and equity. Students look up to her. When our son was asked to describe her, he gushed with superlatives, noting that

she was "kind, smart, funny, patient, understanding, and caring." She attends extracurricular events, talks with siblings of her students about their interests, and builds relationships that affirm each child's whole identity. Through this pure interest in her students, Ms. Pearson instills confidence and models foundational values that will impact them as people long into the future. Most importantly, she models fairness and individualized support through her intentional differentiation. By reading the class with precision and designing varied entry points, she ensures that she is widening access and actively working against the "one-size-fits-all" trap that often leaves students behind. Further, she designs culturally responsive instruction that provides equitable support for her students, nearly half of whom speak Spanish at home. When she implements responsive instruction, students feel seen and understood, they experience success, and they develop confidence because her supports match their needs. Ms. Pearson does more than teach—she transforms. Her impact on students is personal, profound, and permanent and it is fully deserving of this recognition.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 92

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Heidi Capetola

Position: Principal

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: 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.**

Katie Domizio arrived at Great Valley High School five years ago just when we needed her. Our school has always been blessed with students who are excellent musicians and singers, but our former choral director, while excellent in her craft, had difficulty connecting with and inspiring our students. From the moment I met Katie in the interview process, I noticed something special about her. In addition to her bachelor's degree in music education, she also earned a master's degree in music therapy. She had previously served as an elementary music teacher in a neighboring district but had a strong desire to work with high school students. How lucky for GVHS! Katie shared she had incredible teachers at her own high school in New York who encouraged and inspired her to continue her study of music, and she wanted to do the same for her students. Since arriving at GVHS, Mrs. Domizio has done exactly what she set out to do. She is a valued member of our school team, and our school is a better place with her in it. Katie teaches all of our choral classes which includes Chorale, Bella Voce, Concert Choir, and Chambers Singers. She has also taught AP Music Theory and Composition in previous school years. When I visit her classroom and ask students how choir is going, almost every student I speak with begins their response to me with the same four

words, "I love Mrs. Domizio." They then talk to me about a song they are working on, an upcoming concert, or their acceptance to PMEA choir. But it always begins with, "I love Mrs. Domizio."

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

Katie Domizio is a student-centered educator who strives to connect with every student and help them grow. Delia Maldonado, GVHS Class of 2025, shared often with me how grateful she was to have Mrs. Domizio as her teacher. At the conclusion of her senior year she wrote, "Whenever a student has a question she is happy to address it, making sure that every student feels welcome to express their concerns, musical or otherwise. She doesn't make any student feel "less-than" for having limited musical experience and further encourages students that every mistake or uncertainty is just another learning opportunity. Her teaching style heavily supports a Growth Mindset, and it fosters a safe environment where students feel free to sing out and try their best, making their voices heard both figuratively and literally. There are also many of my peers who have learning differences. Mrs. Domizio always makes sure every single student feels included and cared for. I can recall many times where I have needed extra help on a piece I was working on, or was having trouble getting a harmony, and Mrs. Domizio happily worked with me during her free period or after class to make sure I was getting the help I needed. She has sacrificed hours of her time for me and countless other students, ensuring they're becoming the best musicians they can be. In addition, Mrs. Domizio is a safe space for many students to talk about things they're struggling with, whether it be musically, academically, or socially. The community Mrs. Domizio has fostered within her classroom has helped multiple students feel more comfortable within school, creating friendship and fun paried with an enriching educational experience. The environment Mrs. Domizio develops within her classes is truly beneficial to the students she teaches, as well as the community of our school as a whole, and will continue to help many other students to grow their talent, love of music, sense of self, and confidence."

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.

Last year Katie approached our Secondary Supervisor of Teaching and Learning with an idea for providing her students with individual lessons in addition to participation in

choir classes. She explained that she would love to have the opportunity to work with students in smaller groups so that more individual feedback could be given to each student. (Some of her choirs have close to 100 students in them.) She and her colleague worked throughout the previous school year to develop a plan that was implemented this year. As principal, I appreciate the idea, her initiative, and the hard work that Katie displayed to make her idea a reality. Individual and small group lessons are enhancing the musical experience of our students. Additionally, Katie led a trip to California for our music students in March. Our school had traditionally performed at Disney World in Florida in December, but Katie worked with our other music teacher to provide a different experience for her students, one in which our students had the opportunity to participate in a choral workshop lead by a professor at a university in California. In addition to the workshop, they had a lot of fun, too! Katie helped to create an experience that our students will always remember. Most recently as our Winter Choral Concert, I witnessed a beautiful display of collaboration and shared leadership by Katie. During the fall semester Katie supervised a student teacher, Joe Gregorio, who is an accomplished musician who wants to pursue a career in music education. He completed his student teaching experience a few weeks before the concert, but Katie invited him back to conduct two pieces. Mr. Gregorio was thrilled, and he did a fantastic job while "gushing" about his time with Mrs. Domizio and her students. I am quite sure that Mr. Gregorio will be an excellent music educator, and I know he was very grateful for and positively influenced by the time he spent in Mrs. Domizio's classroom.

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

I asked two recent graduates in the class of 2025 about their experiences with Mrs. Domizio. Gavin Stewart is currently in Chicago studying performing arts in college. Gavin wrote, "Without Mrs. Domizio's inspiring presence as a teacher and figure, I would never have found myself so deeply enamored with music. She consistently brings new ideas and excitement towards the choir and displays music as a changing, growing medium, eager to include voices in such that tend to be overlooked or underrepresented. I can honestly say Mrs. Domizio's classes - whether Essentials of Music or choir - have been the spaces that I have learned the most, due to her engrossing enjoyment of her craft; even when I struggled, she allowed me to seek her out to help, and worked with me to find the best approach toward trial and growth. It is difficult to boil the importance and abilities of Mrs. Domizio in the confines of text, thus I implore you to look at the faces of those in choir and alumni from her time here, and

witness the joy and talent that are fostered within. It is because of Mrs. Domizio I can find myself when I sing; it is because of Mrs. Domizio that I know I can continue to sing." Delia Maldonado, freshman at West Chester University wrote, "At Great Valley High School I have been fortunate enough to have Mrs. Domizio as my choir teacher. She has been a huge influence on my decision to pursue music education, and she has shown me that being a great teacher isn't just about the subject, it's about making students feel seen, supported, and encouraged. She fosters a love for music while also building confidence in her students, and that is the kind of impact I hope to have one day. She has worked hard and succeeded in creating a classroom where students not only thrive in their musical studies but also feel a sense of safety and belonging within their school and community, and she has inspired me to try and do the same within my musical career."

APPLICATION NUMBER: 93

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Alex Gentile

Position: Elementary Learning Support Teacher

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: Matt Alloway

Your relationship to the Nominee: Supervisor of Special Education

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 Gentile joined the Upper Darby School District in the 2015 school year as a full time teacher. Prior to her employment with us, she worked in the William Penn School District, and prior to that she was in a long term substitute position with Upper Darby. Having a candidate work with us, leave, and then come back to the same school is not a common experience, but it speaks to her passion as a teacher and her commitment to the unique and wonderful organization of Highland Park Elementary School. In the ten years since she has joined us, she has always supported students in special education as a learning support teacher, including summers working through our Extended School Year program. Alex is a graduate of the West Chester University, where she obtained both her bachelors and masters degrees.

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

Alex is a fantastic teacher, who is well prepared, organized, and thoughtful in her development of intervention and direct instruction. She consistently looks to learn more about each of her children, weather that happens from long conversations with their

families, or rewinding and listening to recordings of her students reading fluency. Alex shows care for her children by developing a solid awareness of their specific needs, then customizing the activities that they will follow in their direct instruction intervention classroom. In addition to the academic progress of her children, she develops and instructs social skills, in addition to instruction on coping strategies and everyday organizational tasks. Her children grow through her attention to their needs. She also fosters student success by pushing into general education environments and also coaching general education colleagues in adaptations and accommodations to help her children become confident and successful in spite of learning difficulties.

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.

At the elementary school level there is no such thing as a "department chairperson". However, the contribution that Alex brings to her school is the unofficial leader in her professional knowledge, the agendas and notes she prepares in team meetings, her follow through with support documents, and her willingness to be the member of her team who always steps forward to search for clarification and guidance. A specific recent example is where she led her school in developing proficiency using the translation software and templates for families who have special education services and who also do not speak English as their primary language. By taking the lead on this professional development project, she became, once again, the go-to person in her school to support her colleagues and reduce their confusion or dependency on reaching outside of the school for help. This was not a required activity, but something that Alex anticipated would be a service to her peers. This is a good general description of the way she approaches any perceived opportunity to grow and refine her understanding and practices.

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

Alex is a role model for her students in the ways that she promotes confidence. Children with learning disabilities can tend to internalize their weaknesses and become reluctant participants in their classroom. Alex attacks this issue by giving them voice in her safe and small intervention classroom, by collaborating with their related service providers to ensure a weaving together of supports, and also by coaching their general education teachers in the best ways to engage children to provide them with the experience of success, as opposed to being met with the cumulative cost of repeated failure. Her

2026 Delaware Valley Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination Review

children truly leave her space more confident as learners and grow through their time with her.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 94

Application 4 of 4 for Maureen Mylotte

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: Joanne DeVito

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.**

Undergraduate degree from East Stroudsburg University Early Childhood Education Elementary Education Master's Equivalency- Reading Specialist K-12 from Cabrini University Over 29 +years teaching experience First few years in NJ, over 27 years in Upper Darby School District Experience includes: 1st grade @ Highland Park Lead Teacher @ Highland Park Upper Darby School District Reading/ELA Coach Current 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 is passionate about building better readers and continuously goes above and beyond for them. Her passion directly translates into fostering a love for reading among her students. She sets high expectations, uses a toolbox of differentiated strategies to meet their various learning needs, looks for new and innovative ways to help her students, and takes the time to celebrate their successes. First, she creates a positive, loving, and safe environment for them to learn. Students love Ms. Mylotte's

kind, nurturing manner, and they are always happy campers and readers when they leave her classroom. Second, Maureen builds up their confidence and self-esteem as readers and never lets them give up. She always makes sure to say something positive to each child before they leave her classroom. She encourages them to show off their progress by having them read to others outside of her classroom, including to school administrators. She also takes the time to have conversations with her students about what it means to be a good human being and empowers them to be compassionate leaders in the world. Third, Maureen provides her students with a wealth of reading resources (she buys books personally) and makes sure that they have books to take home to further their literacy development. Last but not least, Maureen celebrates her students' reading achievements with class prizes, parties, and certificates. Maureen's dedication to building, inspiring, and empowering better readers and humans has made an indelible impact on Highland Park's students and 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.

Maureen Mylotte always goes the extra mile when working with her peers to facilitate excellence, both at Highland Park and across the Upper Darby school district. Maureen mentored several first grade teachers and reading specialists to help them learn the ELA and Reading curricula. She shared with them best teaching practices and strategies to enhance their lessons and student engagement. She is also an invaluable resource and support to her peers at student SST meetings, helping them to determine student literacy needs and best strategies to meet them. Over the years she has become my go-to person for knowledge and analysis of reading programs and initiatives for Highland Park, including the newest addition of the MAP Fluency program. Moreover, Maureen has been an integral part of almost every ELA and Reading initiative and committee across the district, analyzing and reviewing data and programs to best support student literacy across all of Upper Darby's schools as well as offering new and innovative ways to improve student oral reading fluency.

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

Maureen is the Heart of Highland Park, beloved by her students and peers. She embodies and models what it means to be a kind and compassionate human being, teacher and leader. In addition to being a great role model to her reading students, she also models these values for students across the school. Maureen heads up our PBIS

(Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) program and has implemented numerous engaging initiatives to promote and celebrate student positive behavior, self-worth and self-confidence. Examples include nominations and actual goat trophies for student and staff GOATs (Greatest of All Time) - those who consistently exhibit PBIS values and qualities. Additionally, Maureen heads up the Class Golden Tickets initiative, where if a class earns 10 golden tickets for exemplifying the 5Bs they can receive an extra recess. She also leads the HOT (Here and On-Time) Attendance initiative, in which the classroom with the best percentage of students on time and present for the week get a dance party in the morning that includes me (Principal), Maureen and other staff members. Moreso, Maureen leads every single Student of the Month (SOM) Assembly where she continues to support and celebrate student successes. SOM winners receive certificates, window placards and a star student wrist band. Maureen displays all of the SOM certificates on a wall in the school and hosts a breakfast for the SOM winners and their parents. During the SOM Assemblies, Maureen creates a warm and loving atmosphere with fun and engaging games for all. This is extended in all she does for the school. She's the voice over the loud speaker reminding students everyday of the 5Bs and what it means to be a good human. She displays messages of kindness throughout the school building, including a heart collage of students. And, she always attends Home & School events to support the school's students and families. For close to 30 years, Maureen has been modeling and inspiring her students and community to be their best selves, the fruit of which is evident in Highland Park's welcoming and loving environment.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 95

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Veronique Thomas

Position: 4th & 5th Grade ELA & Math Teacher

School: Gateway Charter School

School District if applicable:

County of School: New Castle County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Ilesha Daniels

Your relationship to the Nominee: Parent of student's she taught

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 only know that she teaches 4th and 5th grade. I believe she has been in the profession for at least 20 years if not more.

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

From the moment my children started at Gateway Charter School in Fall 2023, Ms. Thomas has proven that she cares for her students in and out of the classroom. My daughter was in her class first for 4th grade. She always encouraged her to do her best and recognized her abilities. Even though my son was in 3rd grade across the hall, she took the time to get to know him and look out for him as well before he joined her class the following year. She has often brightened my day with text of positive feedback or pictures of my children enjoying an activity. She often adjusts her teaching approach to ensure the greatness she sees in her students comes forth. When the kids have gone home sick or had a rough day, she is kind enough to check in later to see how they are doing. I can site there were moments where a child may have been too hot or too cold with what they wore to school, and she's been kind enough to get them a long or short

sleeve shirt so they will stay in compliance with uniform. She also makes sure kids who did not have money for pretzel days are not left out. She is attentive to how sudden changes i.e. Paraprofessional reassignment can impact a student and communicates to proactively come up with a gameplan. She's usually present for after and outside school activities, especially music events. I've come to see her as an extension of our family and team in the pursuit of my children growing up to be wonderful human beings.

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 usually there for after and outside school activities especially music events working as an assistant. She also puts other's before herself. I reached out to her once to see what the school needed and she did not ask anything for herself or her specific classroom. She said help Ms. Maria build / pay for her Sensory Room items and possibly get a rock climbing wall. Funds for the Library/ reading room and field trip bus fund.

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

She is honest, kind, caring, and loving. Her approach to teaching and learning is one of camaraderie with students, that everyone is learning together, including her.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 96

Application 2 of 2 for Jill Hoffner

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Jill Hoffner

Position: Second Grade Teacher

School: Edgewood Elementary School

School District if applicable: Ridley School District

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Elementary

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Chas Maiers

Your relationship to the Nominee: Superintendent

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.**

Jill Hoffner has been an elementary teacher in the Ridley School District for 34 years. She epitomizes what it means to be a teacher. She consistently prepares and cares about her students success, both academically and socially. She is a life long learner, who is always accepting of new strategies, curriculum, and ideas to improve her students school experience.

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

Jill Hoffner creates lessons and activities that are engaging for her students. She is present at many of their extracurriculars activities; concerts, sporting events, PTO celebrations, and has been invited to the the high school National Honor Society induction from her former students for many years. Just this past year, five of her former elementary students invited her to the event. This is a tremendous honor for teachers when their elementary students reflect on who had an impact on them throughout their schooling and invite them to the induction.

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.

Jill Hoffner is a teacher leader. She is a member of the Edgewood Leadership Council for Teachers. She has presented during many of our professional development days on the science of reading, mathematics, social studies, and science. She is well respected by all of her peers and administrators in the district. Recently, Jill represented Ridley on a national stage during a live webinar for Education Week with the founder of Wilson Reading, Barbara Wilson, on the science of reading.

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

Jill Hoffner is a role model for her students. She demonstrates the lifelines of respect, perseverance, commitment, cooperation, hard work, dedication, and trust. These are some of the lifelines that we promote with our students with our CLASS philosophy...Connected Learning Assures Successful Students. As stated above, she goes above and beyond to see her students; not only in school, but also in the community. She is so worthy of this award. Thank you for your consideration.

APPLICATION NUMBER: 97

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: Colleen Miller

Position: 6th grade math

School: Northley Middle School

School District if applicable: Penn Delco

County of School: Delaware County

Grade Level: Middle School

NOMINATED BY

Your name: Justin Shivone

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 Miller is a veteran middle school teacher with more than 25 years of experience in the classroom. She teaches at the middle school level and holds the required state certifications in her subject area. Throughout her career, she has remained committed to continuous improvement by participating in ongoing professional development, instructional trainings, and curriculum work. In addition to teaching, she serves as both a grade-level team leader and department leader, coordinating curriculum alignment and leading data discussions to improve student outcomes.

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

Colleen's impact on students extends well beyond her scheduled teaching responsibilities. Her classroom is consistently engaging, with students actively participating in lessons that are intentionally designed to build skills and confidence. She regularly revises lessons based on student needs and assessment data. Colleen stays after school to provide academic tutoring for students who need additional support and frequently gives up her lunch period to work one-on-one or in small groups. These extra

efforts ensure students have the time, attention, and encouragement necessary to grow academically.

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 plays a central role in supporting instructional excellence across the building. As a department leader, she coordinates curriculum planning, facilitates data analysis, and helps guide instructional adjustments based on student performance. As a grade-level team leader, she supports colleagues with planning, problem-solving, and student support strategies. She also leads the PBIS student committee, organizing meetings that elevate student voice and promote positive behavior expectations throughout the school. Additionally, she leads PBIS summer trainings, helping staff enter each school year with clear systems and a shared vision for school culture.

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

Colleen consistently models professionalism, responsibility, and leadership. Through PBIS and Leader in Me initiatives, she teaches students accountability, teamwork, and positive decision-making. Students see an educator who works tirelessly, leads with integrity, and demonstrates that true leadership is rooted in service, consistency, and care every single day for students, staff, families, and the broader school community as well.