

Teacher (Elementary)

Description

Although Mrs. --- has ALPS' (Accelerated Learning Program for Students) students who are accelerated learners, she works very hard to ensure that they master all aspects of the advanced curriculum. She comes early and stays late to work with individual students and it shows in her students' test scores. Last year on the end of year SAGE tests, all of her students reached proficiency in math and language arts. Not only did her students reach proficiency, their scores were phenomenal. Her language arts score of 444 was 122 points higher than the state's average for 3rd grade language arts and 120 points higher than Jordan District's average. In math, her score of 364 was 50 points higher than Utah's average and 49 points higher than Jordan District's average. She should show similar, if not higher scores on the SAGE tests this year, if her benchmark scores are any indication. Her benchmark scores from the pre-test to post-test this year have averaged 15% growth with her average post-test scores being 96%. Her class also won the Jordan District Monster Math Competition last year and is hoping to do the same this year.

Not only does Mrs. --- help students achieve at high levels, she helps her students believe they are capable of great things. One parent said, **"Ms. --believes in her students' abilities and knows they are capable of great things. That makes her a good teacher. What makes her great is that she helps the students recognize that they are capable of so much more. She helps them believe in themselves."**

Her former students continue to find success years later because of Mrs. --'s influence in third grade. A 9th grade student that had Mrs. -- in 3rd grade said, "She was my first teacher that got me excited about math. Many students do not learn to do two-step equations in math until they are in sixth or seventh grade. Mrs. -- taught my class to do them when we were in third grade. Now, after she helped me appreciate math more, I, along with many of the kids she taught, and in the highest math class available to someone my age in the district. We all enjoy learning math thanks to Mrs. --."

She also helps her students learn the value of perseverance. One mother said, **"She gave them opportunities to do difficult things, and taught them how to not get frustrated when they had to work to figure something out. It was foreign to many of them, but Mrs. -- knew this skill was critical to her gifted students' success, so she spent the year patiently helping them master it."**

Another mother said Mrs. -- helped her son "learn 'how to learn' and find the enjoyment in success."

Mrs. -- is masterful at differentiating her teaching to meet her students' needs. One mother of three boys, all of who have had Ms. --, said, "All of them have been able to grow in meaningful ways under her tutelage. It's worth noting that these three boys, as you might expect, have very different personalities, different educational strengths and weaknesses, and different needs. Mrs. -- has been able to adapt her

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teaching style to each of their needs, which means it's virtually certain that she has been able to adapt to all of the other students she teaches each year."

She also makes learning fun. On the first day of school, with her room decorated in a safari theme, she met the parents and students on the playground, dressed in a safari outfit, to welcome them to a year of adventure. One parent said, **"She put their fears to rest, and drew them immediately in with her love and excitement for learning. I'll never forget standing on the playground with a large group of parents that morning, discussing how impressed we were with her, and how relieved we felt that this teacher already seemed amazing."** Mrs. -- continues these amazing types of experiences all year. One mother said, "Mrs. -- does a great job of creating learning experiences that stimulate creativity, thought, and academic achievement." Mrs. -- expects students to excel academically, but also goes above and beyond in bringing in the arts, music, and drama. Last year her students performed an interpretive dance to tell a story they had read in class. After the production was complete, a boy in another class told his teacher how cool it was to see the dance. Her wax museum biographies were such a huge hit, all of the third grade teachers have joined in and it has become a part of our school's culture.

She is very patient with her students as they learn. A former student said, **"I was never worried to ask her for help, or to explain something to me. When she did explain it, she had patience with me, and told me in a way I could understand. If every teacher were like Mrs. --, the world would be a better place."**

She treats her students with love and respect. A mother said, "Mrs. -- has a great love and dedication to her students and it reflects in the way that they are treated in the classroom. We have always appreciated that she has a set expectation of her students and they know that she is in charge, yet it is done in a loving way." Another mom agreed, "Her class was always so respectful and well managed each time I entered the classroom. She taught them to be respectful to her and to their fellow classmates. She is extremely patient with her students and is supportive of their differences inside and outside of the classroom."

Parents, teachers, and students all comment on Mrs. --'s kindness and love for everyone. She goes out of her way to make sure all of her students feel supported and loved. A student in her class this year struggles with self-confidence, and that has caused her stress and anxiety. Her mother said, "Because Ms. -- believes in her, she now believes in herself. Ms. -- has helped her recognize her gifts and talents and has grown more confident in her own abilities." A former student had a similar experience. She said, "I was a shy little girl she and she helped me gain confidence and would challenge me to help others in the class that were shy than I was. I felt like she really cared about me inside and outside of school." A parent said, "Mrs. -- helped my son get into speech therapy that year, as he was still not pronouncing his r's correctly. She helped him feel comfortable and confident, knowing it was kind of embarrassing to him to leave class to go to speech. Putting

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his mind at ease, and helping the rest of the class understand how normal it is to leave class for a little while to receive help in one way or another was a valuable lesson for all of her students that year, especially my son.”

Her thoughtfulness for her students resonates throughout their lives, not just while they are in her class. A former student said, “I am now a sophomore at Herriman High school and she continues to help me today by giving me advice on high school classes, life lessons, and supporting me in all of my various activities and sports I do. She is an amazing teacher!” Once you are her student, you have her love and support for life. A mother said, “When he was not in her class anymore, I could still see her love and concern for my son when he would see her at school.” **Several parents shared stories of her attending their children’s extra curricular events throughout their lives. She often receives invitations from former students to attend their plays and musicals at the middle and high schools, their Eagle Scout Court of Honors, graduations, mission farewells, and weddings because they know how much she loves them, how proud of them she will be, and want her to celebrate their successes. A mother said, “I have heard her say after being very warmly received by an excited group of former students she was watching perform at Bingham High, ‘I am glad to be Mrs. --.’”**

She also goes out of her way to help parents. When she found out a mother was going to be out of town during parent-teacher conferences, she called and offered to schedule appointments for both of her children, even though she only had one of the children in her own class. The mother said, “It’s a small thing, but small things matter. And while Ms. -- takes care of all the small things, she is a BIG deal. We love her!” Another mother asked for her help when her son reached a Z level in reading, but was still too young for many of the topics found in books on that level. The mother said, “Since he was so young, she made recommendations and helped us choose books on his reading level that were also age appropriate. Not an easy task. I will always be grateful for that.”

One mother has continued to volunteer in Mrs. --’s classroom for many years and said, “Her love for her students, and her commitment to their academic, social, and emotional well being have never changed. She builds their confidence, their character, and their sense of self-worth, while helping them reach new academic heights.” She went on to say Mrs. -- deserves this award because “She teaches children to be kind, to include others, to help each other, to believe in themselves, to give their best effort, to be patient and persistent when learning something difficult, to work hard to achieve academic excellence, to look to examples from the past as role models, and to know that they can become, and achieve, anything they choose in their future.” For these reasons, and so many more, we proudly nominate Mrs. -- for this distinguished award.