



Ponca City Public School District Announces and Honors 2020 Teacher of the Year Nominees

The Ponca City Public School District is proud to announce and honor the 2020 Teacher of the Year (TOY) nominees. The District Teacher of the Year will be announced at the annual TOY Banquet hosted by the district on February 19, 6:00 p.m. at the Senior High School. The theme this year is “#TEAMPCPS!”

The Three Finalists – Amy Hollingsworth, Cortney Horne, and Zach Murray are the three finalists for the district. Each elementary site has one nominee with the secondary schools having more than one to allow a more proportional representation from each site. After the nominees are announced, the TOY Committee has the difficult task of selecting three finalists for the esteemed District Teacher of the Year honor. Each site TOY nominee is listed below along with information about each of them in keeping with this year’s theme.

Finalist Amy Hollingsworth – Library Media Specialist at Lincoln Elementary

Lincoln Principal Liz Hargraves said, “Amy Hollingsworth is a team player. She believes in making our school the best it can be. She demonstrates a positive attitude and devotion to kids. She constantly searches for the very best pathway of learning for each student. Amy uses her love for reading to bleed into the lives of Lincoln students, as well as staff.”

Finalist Cortney Horne – Title I Math at West Middle School

“Mrs. Horne is an excellent teacher,” stated West Principal Trenton Murner. “She is a key part in the success of our math program. Mrs. Horne does a tremendous job building relationships with her students. She is willing to do whatever it takes to motivate students to be successful in the classroom. Students love the hands-on approach and the projects they get to create. She is a true example of what it takes to be on #TEAMPCPS! We are excited that she is on the West Middle School team!”

Finalist Zach Murray – Science Teacher at Ponca City High School

Po-Hi Principal Thad Dilbeck said, “Mr. Murray is a dedicated member of #TEAMPCPS. Mr. Murray works very hard at his craft, and it shows as he is teaching his students. He is enthusiastic about teaching and goes the extra mile to help students develop tools to be successful in high school. Not only does he strive for student success in the short four years he has them, but Mr. Murray’s efforts also help mold students to be successful in their future endeavors. Another aspect to Mr. Murray’s success for students striving in the classroom is his willingness to be available to them when they need extra help. Mr. Murray’s dedication to #TEAMPCPS also benefits the staff in the Ponca City School District as he shares his wealth of knowledge in education that goes beyond the four walls of Ponca City High School. Ponca City High school is fortunate to have a teacher like Mr. Murray that models a great work ethic to the students and staff, and Ponca City High School will be forever grateful for the impact he has made on our students.”

Krista Ellis – Kindergarten Teacher at Garfield Elementary

Garfield Principal Lori Cox said, “Krista is a Wildcat! **Work Ethic:** Krista is the first one here every morning and she has had perfect attendance for almost two complete school years. We also could not get school supplies from Walmart to Garfield without her muscles and her truck. **Improve:** Krista is always looking for ways to help her students achieve more and be better little people. **Leadership:** Krista sets a good example for her students each and every day with her kind words and actions. **Discipline:** Krista always does the right thing. **Compete:** Krista never accepts anything but the best from herself and her students. **Attitude:** Krista always has a smile on her face and a kind word for her students and coworkers. **Teamwork:** Krista is always willing to go above and beyond for what is best for her students. She is also always willing to help any of her coworkers any way she can. Krista exemplifies the **Wildcat Way!**”

Jenny Lewallen – Counselor at Liberty Elementary

“Jenny Lewallen is an educator all about United Wildcats,” said Principal Jennifer Martinez. “Mrs. Lewallen is a passionate counselor who cares deeply about student success. She wears many hats and is always available to help those in need. She strives to make each day an opportunity that challenges our students academically and socially. Mrs. Lewallen is at the forefront in leading Liberty to change, to new ideas and new ways of approaching how to teach and reach students. Mrs. Lewallen truly is a team player for Ponca City Public Schools and it is a privilege to work with her.”

Rebecca Stephens – Second Grade Teacher at Roosevelt Elementary

“#TEAMPCPS-United Wildcats is the perfect hashtag to describe Rebecca Stephens,” stated Roosevelt Principal Ronda Merrifield. “In two short years of teaching, she has risen to the top as a teacher driven to be an exemplary team player while striving to be the best classroom teacher she can become. She models a love for learning and holds high expectations for her students to constantly strive to reach their goals. We are proud to have Mrs. Stephens on our team as one of Ponca City Schools’ MVPs.”

Wendy Landes – Physical Education Teacher at Trout Elementary

“Wendy Landes is a Wildcat through and through,” said Principal Carla Fry. “She believes in the power of a team, and as a coach, Wendy sees firsthand the development of children through team memberships. Together we can accomplish more. Wendy is a foundational player to the development of students at Trout. She is a motivator! She is an academic cheerleader! She is a life coach! Ms. Landes builds successful citizens.”

Traci McHenry – Second Grade Teacher at Union Elementary

“Traci has been wearing a Wildcat uniform for a long time,” said Union Principal Dr. Trina Resler. “From her days in a Wildcat cheer uniform, to her present second grade classroom, she is #TEAMPCPS all the way. She can always be seen around the district, at various events, rooting all of us on.”

Sandy Meador – Special Education Teacher at Woodlands Elementary

Woodlands Principal Tim Williams said, “Sandy Meador is a team player extraordinaire. Not just at Woodlands, but also across the district, Sandy is always willing to step up and share her expertise anytime it is needed. She makes a huge difference in the lives of her students as they are educated now, so they can have successful futures.”

Laura Glowacki – Prekindergarten Teacher at Washington PreK Center

“Our Teacher of the Year candidate Laura Glowacki is a true Ponca City Public School team player. She fosters positive relationships with her students, parents, and staff members. She communicates her ideas clearly, effectively, and respectfully. She exhibits personal initiative that many times adds more responsibilities for herself. She quickly and easily adapts to changing situations without becoming overwhelmed. She displays a genuine commitment not only to our students and staff, but also to the entire #TEAMPCPS.”

Laura Layton – Mathematics Teacher at West Middle School

West Principal Trenton Murner said, “Mrs. Layton is a tremendous teacher. She is willing to do whatever is needed not only for the students, but also for “#TEAMPCPS.” She is constantly trying to find better approaches to reach students. She is a team player and is always willing to do what is needed for her students and school. She is a great asset to our math department, staff and students. We are so glad to have her at West Middle School!”

Michele Bodenstein – Mathematics Teacher at East Middle School

East Principal Denton Long said, “Michele is a shining example of what every teacher should strive to be. The compassion, integrity, knowledge, and commitment that she exhibits serves as a model to East Middle School and to the district. East is definitely a better place with Mrs. Bodenstein. #TEAMPCPS!”

Staci Jacques – Special Education English Teacher at Ponca City High School

Po-Hi Principal Thad Dilbeck stated, “Ms. Jacques demonstrates what it is to be a member of #TEAMPCPS by modeling excitement and a positive attitude to her students. Her contagious positive attitude towards learning is seen by the students that she interacts with daily. She cares for her student’s education and wellbeing and goes above and beyond to make sure they enjoy their time here at Po-Hi and receive the best education possible. Ms. Jacques’ constant reminders about her high expectations for every student teaches her students that they can be successful in every aspect of their life. She is also frequently seen talking to students about their future and how to reach the goals they have for their lives. Ponca City High School is fortunate to have such a caring and hard-working teacher like Ms. Jacques. Ponca City High School will be forever grateful for the impact that she has made on our students.”

Barbara Scherich – English Teacher at Ponca City High School

“Mrs. Scherich is very passionate about teaching students using respect and kindness,” explained Principal Thad Dilbeck. “She has high expectations for all of her students and supports them in their journey to reach their goals in both the classroom and in life. She strives every day to get her students to learn, and Mrs. Scherich’s professionalism and kindness demonstrates what it is to be a member of #TEAMPCPS. Her students know that they are going to be pushed to reach their potential while being respected and cared for the entire way. Ponca City High School is fortunate to have a teacher like Mrs. Scherich that exhibits the expectations of the Wildcat Way and teaches her students to do the same. Ponca City High School will be forever grateful for the impact she has made on our students.”

Danielle McCollum – Language Arts Teacher at Wildcat Academy

Wildcat Academy Principal Karla Streeter explained, “Ms. McCollum is always willing to go above and beyond to ensure that her students receive the best education possible. Ms. McCollum is a team player and can usually be seen helping other teachers. She volunteers for extra duty and is almost always the last teacher to leave the building at night. She also offers her assistance at the high school. She works all year on preparing for the prom. Her tireless efforts have earned her the well-deserved honor bestowed upon her.”

Pictured top L-R: Amy Hollingsworth, Cortney Horne, Zach Murray

Pictured Middle L-R: Krista Ellis, Jenny Lewallen, Rebecca Stephens, Wendy Landes, Traci McHenry, Sandy Meador

Pictured Bottom L-R: Laura Glowacki, Laura Layton, Michele Bodenstein, Staci Jacques, Barbara Scherich, Danielle McCollum

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