



## **Ponca City Public School District Announces and Honors 2019 Teacher of the Year Nominees**

The Ponca City Public School District is proud to announce and honor the 2019 district 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 March 1, 2018, 6:00 p.m. at the Senior High School. The theme this year is “Team Ponca ... Together We’re Better!”

**The Three Finalists Are – Cherie Hampl, Lindsay Roehl, and Jessica Wyckoff** 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 the theme.

### **Finalist Cherie Hampl - English Teacher at East Middle School**

East Middle School Principal Denton Long said, “It would be extremely difficult to find a more devoted and selfless team member than Mrs. Hampl. She often goes beyond the realm of her duties to help out members of her Professional Learning Community (PLC), Team, and anyone associated with Ponca City Public Schools regardless of position or subject area. When I need someone to head up a special activity or project, she never hesitates to take responsibility, and she will always do the task to the best of her ability. Cherie is loved by her students and peers and she is always a positive influence on our staff. Cherie Hampl is a shining example of what a teacher should be and we are extremely blessed to have her at East Middle School!”

### **Finalist Lindsay Roehl – Kindergarten Teacher at Lincoln**

“Lindsay believes in Ponca City Schools, and I believe that’s what makes her a team player for our district,” said Lincoln Principal Elisabeth Hargraves. “She demonstrates a positive attitude to change and strives to grow professionally. She recognizes the value of every student and how important it is to listen to them. She realizes the struggles and challenges her little kindergartners come to school with each day. To remind her how precious they are, she keeps a journal of all the interesting, bizarre, and funny things kids say in her class. It is amazing to watch how much her kids love her and how she returns that love to them.”

### **Finalist Jessica Wyckoff – Special Education Teacher at Union**

Union Principal Dr. Trina Resler stated, “Jessica embodies the Wildcat Way. She is a leader, a team player, and an inspiration to so many. Jessica is more than a teacher; she is provider, a mentor, a true friend, and advocate for her students. I truly believe Jessica inspires her students, and others at Union, to show compassion and respect for all students. She teaches us that everyone is special and unique in their own way.”

### **Jordan Biester – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher at Garfield**

“Our Garfield team is truly better because Jordan Biester is a part of it,” stated Garfield Principal Lori Cox. “Jordan teaches third grade and is a wonderful teacher and coworker. Her positive attitude and love for her students shine through in everything she does. She tutors after school with fourth graders. She is part of our building leadership team and is always willing to help her coworkers and students anyway she can. We are so proud to have her representing Garfield this year for the 2018-2019 Teacher of the Year.”

### **Sarah Orr – Music Teacher at Liberty**

Jennifer Martinez, Liberty Principal, explained, “Sarah Orr is an educator all about ‘Team Ponca.’ Mrs. Orr is a passionate teacher who cares deeply about student learning. She strives to make each day an opportunity that challenges her students musically and socially. Mrs. Orr is open to change, to new ideas, new technology and new ways of approaching how to teach students. Mrs. Orr spends countless extra hours working with students in enrichment opportunities, such as Circle the State and Orff Ensemble. In addition to her duties at Liberty, she works with the High School Color Guard. Mrs. Orr truly is a team player for Ponca City Public Schools, and it is a privilege to work with her.”

### **Brooke Williams – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher at Roosevelt**

Roosevelt Principal Ronda Merrifield said, “Brooke Williams exemplifies the characteristics of the quintessential ‘Ponca Team’ member. Her dedication to students passing through her classroom sets them on the right track to succeed their entire Wildcat career. When working with her classroom team, Ms. Williams exudes an attitude of caring and compassion. When you talk to her former students, the fact that she cares deeply is one of the first things they will tell you. Ms. Williams’ experience and educational background give students a great foundation for learning. She is very knowledgeable regarding student standards and keeps the classroom team focused on the correct learning goals. Ms. Williams’ leadership skills are displayed in a variety of ways. The professionals who work with her recognize her as an invaluable resource willing to share and support them on their career path. Roosevelt is proud to have Ms. Williams as part of the Wildcat team.”

### **Karen Heersche – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher at Trout**

“Karen Heersche retired from Kansas prior to joining the Ponca City team,” said Trout Principal Carla Fry. “With her, she brought thirty-two years of tried and true experiences into her classroom. She also brought thirty-two years of classroom culture into room number six. Karen is naturally a sharing person. She shares team building and instructional ideas with both her site and district PLC teams. Karen is an advocate of technology in the classroom and has shared ideas and programs at SIM meetings. Karen Heersche has enhanced our staff and students at Trout Elementary in multiple ways.”

### **Ashley Magnus – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher at Woodlands**

Woodland’s Principal Tim Williams explained, “Ashley Magnus always keeps the individual success of her students at the center of her teaching. She makes whatever adjustments are needed in instruction to help

facilitate and guide the achievements of her 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. She understands this as a vital role in 'Team Ponca' as she helps prepare students not only for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but as they move into middle school and high school a few years down the road. Thanks, Ashley, for making a difference!"

### **Meghan Stafford – Pre-Kindergarten Teacher at Washington PreK Center**

"Teamwork makes us stronger and our teacher of the year Meghan Stafford is a valuable team player," said Principal Barbara Davis. "She sees her students as her team, and she works to help them learn the foundational skills they need to be successful as they move on to kindergarten. Meghan is also a valuable member of our Washington PreK team. She is always coming up with ideas to promote unity and boost staff morale. 'Team Ponca' is better and stronger because of Meghan Stafford."

### **Andrew Orr – Band at West Middle School & District-wide Assistant Director**

West Middle School Principal Trenton Murner had this to say, "Mr. Orr is a tremendous teacher. He is willing to do whatever is needed not only for the students, but also for 'Team Ponca.' Mr. Orr has a go-getter attitude and will work around the clock for his students, staff and band program. He is constantly trying to find better approaches to reach students. He is a model teacher for students and staff to look up to. He truly believes in the idea that 'together we're better.'"

### **Chawnte Sober – Reading & Title I at West Middle School**

"Ms. Sober is an excellent teacher. She is a key part in the success of our reading program," stated West Middle School Principal Trenton Murner. "Ms. Sober 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 enjoy going to her class, and she is, and has been, a key component to the West family for many years. She is definitely a big part of 'Team Ponca.'"

### **Bethany Fredricks – Study Skills at Ponca City Senior High**

"Ms. Fredricks is an exceptional teacher," said Principal Thad Dilbeck. "Her kind demeanor, vast experience, and love for all things Po-Hi set her apart. Ms. Fredricks serves as a department head. Her leadership ability enables her department, like her classroom, to run like a well-oiled machine. Ms. Fredricks is also always willing to go above and beyond to assist students. Ms. Fredricks is definitely an important part of 'Team Ponca.'"

### **Jaimee Miller– Special Education at Ponca City Senior High**

Senior High School Principal Thad Dilbeck said, "Ms. Miller brings great enthusiasm and compassion to work every day. Her positive attitude combined with her love for students make her classroom a special place. On any given day you can find Ms. Miller giving her all to make sure students are given the best chance to succeed academically and on the volleyball court. Ms. Miller is definitely an important part of 'Team Ponca.'"

### **Barbara Scherich – English Teacher at Ponca City Senior High**

"Ms. Scherich makes Po-Hi a better place," said Po-Hi Principal Thad Dilbeck. "Her consistent professionalism combined with genuine care for students is second to none. Ms. Scherich is in her second year as a teacher at Po-Hi. From her first day here, she has made a positive impact in the English department, in her relationships with students and parents, and with all faculty and staff. Ms. Scherich is definitely an important part of 'Team Ponca.'"

### **Joshua Swain – PE Teacher at Wildcat Academy**

Karla Streeter, Director of District Alternative Education, said, "Coach Swain is a true team player. He readily helps wherever he is needed. Coach Swain has assumed more responsibilities every year. He is eager and willing to learn new duties. Coach Swain makes sure that all team members are working in a safe environment. He is in charge of the food pantry and works hard to make sure none of the students go hungry. Coach Swain's empathy and compassion for his students is apparent in all he does. The students react to his calm, quiet manner with respect and affection. Coach Swain is a valuable member of the Wildcat Academy staff. We are proud to have him on our team."

Pictured top L-R: Hampl, Roehl, Wyckoff

Pictured Middle L-R: Biester, Orr, Williams, Heersche, Magnus, Stafford

Pictured Bottom L-R: Orr, Sober, Scherich, Miller, Fredricks, Swain

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