

Cluster and SI Teacher Nominations for 2009-20

Jennifer Elliott, Hampden Elementary, 3rd grade

1. When you step into Ms. Elliott's classroom, you immediately sense that you have entered a hub of learning, curiosity and adventure.
2. Ms. Elliott's creative room theme (Where the Wild Things Are) is active and engaging. The theme is extended to earning "Wild Bucks" for prizes at auctions throughout the year. Students choose to use or save Wild Bucks and learn a little about financial responsibility.
3. Community and care for others is demonstrated and encouraged regularly in the classroom. Students heard the story "Fill A Bucket" at the beginning of the year and are assigned to "Fill A Bucket" each evening.
4. Respect and admiration for Ms. Elliott is evident in the interactions between Ms. Elliott and her students.
5. Creative projects to encourage reading a variety of genres were assigned throughout the year. Projects are quickly displayed in the classroom and hallway.
6. Collaboration and brainstorming are incorporated during literary centers. For example, students work in teams of 2-3 to solve an extreme problem. Using different colored "hats" to allow for all kinds of solutions, they come up with solutions. Then, they work together to narrow down their solutions and present their final choice.
7. Ms. Elliott added a reading blog to her website this year to encourage students to share their favorite reads.
8. Parents are welcomed in the classroom for literacy centers and special events.

Brian Barrick, Sporting Hill Elementary, 4th Grade

I would like to nominate Brian Barrick, Sporting Hill Elementary, Room 210, Grade 4, as the best cluster class teacher. My child has blossomed from his teaching. I have gone in to observe him and he keeps the class engaged with his enthusiasm, humor, and by challenging them. This is the first time my child has repeatedly told me that she's not bored in school. He cares about them beyond their grades too, and keeps track of other events in their lives (vacations, soccer games, etc.). Additionally, he has been very responsive whenever I have contacted him with a question or concern and has always called me back the same day. I truly can't say enough compliments about Mr. Barrick, and think any student would be lucky to have him as a teacher.

I'd like to nominate Mr. Barrick, 4th grade cluster classroom teacher, at Sporting Hill. He led his class to be at the top of the entire United States in the First In Math Program. My daughter has never been so intellectually challenged, yet so enthusiastic about learning at the same time. He is a wonderful teacher, and it is obvious that he deeply cares about his students! He greatly deserves recognition for his efforts.

Michael Saucier, Green Ridge Elementary, Fifth Grade

My daughter is a fifth grade student in the cluster classroom at Green Ridge Elementary School. She would like to nominate Mr. Michael Saucier for the Best Cluster classroom teacher award. He goes an extra mile to make schoolwork fun. She has improved in every subject, especially writing, in his class.

Cindy Kennedy, Shaull Elementary, 4th Grade

We would like to proudly nominate **Mrs. Cindy Kennedy**, 4th Grade Cluster Classroom Teacher from Shaull Elementary School. Mrs. Kennedy is an extremely dedicated teacher who continually gives her best to her students, but even more importantly, encourages her students to also continually give their best in all aspects of their schoolwork. She not only teaches them with a keen understanding of high achieving and gifted abilities, but she also teaches them how to bring out the best in themselves by encouraging respect for self and others, how to show kindness on a daily basis, and does all this effortlessly because she herself is such a kind and respectful person and sets a wonderful example for her students. She is always readily available to discuss any issue with either parents or students and is very approachable in her demeanor. Mrs. Kennedy is a much-loved and well-respected teacher and has had many years of experience working with academically high-achieving and gifted students. She goes above and beyond the curriculum by encouraging the children to "think outside the box" and understands that children in the cluster classroom often have different ways of looking at problem-solving and she gives the children opportunities to express their thoughts within the classroom setting. On a personal level, we have watched our son blossom this past year from being an introverted boy who was often uncomfortable expressing his way of problem-solving to a boy who now embraces the fact that he often looks at problems and issues from a different angle. It has done wonders for his self-esteem! Our son LOVES his cluster classroom and looks forward to school every day and is no longer bored in the classroom!

Victoria Sider, Shaull Elementary, 5th Grade

We wanted to nominate Victoria Sider - the fifth grade cluster classroom teacher at Shaull Elementary. Miss Sider has been wonderful this year with our son, who has had some struggles this year with newly diagnosed learning disabilities. She has been caring, patient and kind. She has worked very hard to help him this year, and we are sure that with out her, his year would have been much more difficult. We know that she had a huge class of fifth graders to work with this year, and we think she should be commended for all of her hard work and patience. She is truly an asset to the school district, and we hope that she receives recognition for all of her hard work.

Dayl Shaddock, Silver Spring Elementary, 3rd Grade

We would like to nominate Mrs. Dayl Lynn Shaddock. She is the cluster teacher for third grade at Silver Spring. She is phenomenal. The kids have so much fun in her class and they don't even know they are learning. She spends numerous hours after school working with this new curriculum and finding ways to challenge this group of kids. I will be very sad when my son has to move on next year. This has been his best year so far.

Barb Fischer, Monroe Elementary, Special Interest

I would nominate Barb Fischer as outstanding SI teacher in that she has exhibited an enormous amount of flexibility this past year as we have worked to provide opportunities for challenge to the Monroe SI students, in particular the 4th grade kids. Monroe 4th grade is not clustered due to small class size (<50 students in 4th grade). As such, the teachers (Kostelac/Borzilleri) and Barb Fischer have had to develop unique approaches not in practice in any other elementary school. This year Mrs. Fischer was presented a unique challenge - required to meet the curricular demands of the cluster initiative for 3rd and 5th grades and having to create a unique gifted

program for Monroe 4th grade. Her tireless effort in providing stimulating and challenging opportunities for the students is worthy of recognition; her commitment to her students goes far beyond the teacher's contracted work day; and her adaptability to curricular changes is admirable.

Jason Baker, Silver Spring, Green Ridge and Hampden Elementary, Special Interest

My daughter would like to nominate Mr. Jason Baker for the best SI teacher. She has been with Mr. Baker since she was identified in first grade. She absolutely loves everything Mr. Baker does in the SI class.

Hannah Belser, Shaull, Middlesex and Sporting Hill Elementary, Special Interest

We would like to nominate Hannah Belser for best SI teacher. She has been a wonderful support to us and our child this past year. She really cares about and advocates for the needs of “her kids”. She treats people, animals and the earth with sensitivity and respect, and this value is passed along in her work with students. My child really enjoys her time with Ms. Belser.