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DCPS honors outstanding staff members 'Kids First' Teachers of the Year, Customer Service and Support Professional honorees announced

Daviess County Public Schools announced recipients of the seventh annual Teacher of the Year, Customer Service and Support Professional Awards during the district's Opening Day ceremony at the Sportscenter today (Aug. 6, 2019). The "Kids First" Awards are an opportunity for all staff members to come together to celebrate those who exemplify the highest ideals of the DCPS mission.

DCPS Kids First Teacher of the Year Awards

The DCPS district has identified the following characteristics of a great teacher: Student centered, shows empathy; develops and maintains positive relationships; growth mindset; communication with all groups; engagement; knowledge of content; team player; prepared; coachable; invested; passionate about teaching and learning.

Nominations were accepted from colleagues, students, parents and administrators, and were reviewed by the DCPS Office of Teaching and Learning and members of the DCPS Future Leaders Academy, who also scheduled classroom observations with finalists. Winners at the elementary, middle and high school levels received beautiful "Kids First" sculptures and will represent the DCPS district as candidates for state-level Teacher of the Year honors.

The following outstanding educators are truly deserving of our recognition for their "Kids First" commitment to providing a high-quality educational experience for every child, every day:

2019 DCPS Kids First Elementary Teacher of the Year Allie Lindow – Country Heights Elementary School

Allie Lindow demonstrates the characteristics of a great teacher each and every day!

Passionate about Teaching and Learning – That is a tremendous attribute of Allie Lindow. She is always seeking ways to reach and teach every student in her classroom. She is committed to finding the keys that unlocks each child's potential and meet their individual needs, always with a goal of enhancing student learning.

Allie also sets an example for her students and colleagues as both a lifelong learner and as a teacher leader. She is currently working toward National Board certification. She strives to strengthen her skills to be the best teacher she can possibly be ... so her students can also be the best.



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Student-Centered/Shows Empathy – As a primary teacher at Country Heights, Allie Lindow wants to see all children succeed and grow. She guides children in the right direction with kindness and compassion as they take their first steps along the pathway of lifelong learning. She truly cares about kids.

Allie is always focused on her students – with both her head and her heart. She uses data and knowledge of her students to drive her instructional decisions. Allie builds relationships with her students and sets high expectations for ALL. She demonstrates empathy with her students as she gets to know them as individuals on a one-on-one basis.

2019 DCPS Kids First Middle School Teacher of the Year

Laura Murphy – Daviess County Middle School

Laura Murphy demonstrates excellence as a “Kids First” teacher every day. She exhibits top-level passion in everything she does! She expects to see every student succeed, even if just in small increments.

Laura makes positive connections and develops strong relationships with her students – those who are naturally lovable and those who put up that “wall.” Especially for those kids who are hard to reach but need it most, Laura makes it a priority to “win them over,” no matter how stubborn they may be in the beginning. It is not unusual to overhear kids talking about Ms. Murphy in the hallways, saying things like “She is my favorite teacher” or “She is awesome!”

Laura constantly seeks out ways to improve her teaching, and has the courage to ask our toughest audience for their opinions as she invites her students to tell her what she can do to improve as a language arts teacher. Most importantly – she listens and responds accordingly!

Laura enjoys the success of others, especially her colleagues. She praises the work they do and she is eager to learn from them as well. She is inspired by great ideas from her colleagues and seeks to implement or customize those ideas to help her own students reach their highest potential.

2019 DCPS Kids First High School Teacher of the Year

Paul Bates – Apollo High School

Paul Bates exceeds many of the characteristics that DCPS has identified that great teachers have. With any visit to his classroom, or simply being present to hear any conversation that he has with students, it is easy to see his passion for teaching.

He models a Growth Mindset by always working to ensure he is up on the latest trends as a teacher of biology. He is dedicated to see that DCPS is leading the way with the Next Gen Science Standards.

Paul Bates has earned the respect of both students and staff at Apollo High School for his dedication to student success. He consistently goes the extra mile, as evidenced by his willingness to provide support and assistance for students before or after school to help them build a strong foundation on which to grow their learning and comprehension. His professional colleagues also seek him out for help and guidance. Paul is definitely a leader among leaders at Apollo, as demonstrated by the trust and confidence his peers have placed in him as a teacher representative on the School-Based Decision Making Council.

In every capacity that he serves, Paul is the consummate professional. He consistently demonstrates a spirit of service as well as authentic respect and appreciation for other people and their opinions. He is a shining example of putting “Kids First” to develop confident and capable young adults who, in turn, will carry on the legacy of rising up as they take their place in the world.



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DCPS Kids First Support Professional and Customer Service Awards

The Daviess County Public Schools district proudly recognized members of our support staff for their outstanding contributions to our mission during the Aug. 6 Opening Day program. Nominees for the 2019 DCPS Kids First Support Professional and Customer Service Awards were evaluated in several areas of criteria:

- Kindness
- Active listening
- Conflict resolution
- Dependability
- Effective communication
- Empathy
- Friendliness
- Patience
- Creativity
- Making families feel welcome and valued
- Challenging students to do their best
- Supporting families with “Kids First” in mind

2019 DCPS Kids First Support Professional Dale Caraway – Transportation Department

Those fortunate enough to know Dale Caraway agree that he could actually be a nominee for one of the DCPS Teacher of the Year Awards! He has made it his personal mission to take advantage of the time he has with his kids every morning and afternoon as he provides transportation for English Language Learners on the way to Southern Oaks Elementary School.

He challenges his kids to grow as leaders, as the older students serve as mentors to the younger children. He teaches them songs and plays games that are not only fun; they are also designed to help these children learn. “Mr. Dale” is especially mindful about teaching these kids the little things that many of us take for granted ... although most lifelong citizens cannot name all 50 states in the order in which they were admitted to the Union, as his kids can do!

Mr. Dale knows his kids so well. If he notices a change in behavior, or realizes a child has been absent for a couple of days, or sees that a child does not have appropriate clothing or a warm coat in the winter, he takes action to meet those needs. He attends school events to show his support for “his kids.”

He teaches by example as he encourages his kids to be kind to one another and to lift one another up. That’s the beautiful thing about “Rising Up” to “Be the One” – it doesn’t stop with just one! For this amazing “teacher on wheels,” it’s a whole busload!

2019 DCPS Kids First Customer Service Award Amy Thomas – Sorgho Elementary School

As an outstanding representative of our DCPS 2019 theme of “Rising Up,” Amy Thomas literally “rises up” every early every morning so that she can start the day with a smile for students, families and staff at Sorgho Elementary School.

There are so many things that make her special in her service to our customers – our families and kids. As an instructional assistant working with special education students, Amy puts “Kids First” before that first bell ever rings! She stands outside as a car rider greeter and somehow when you see her smile, it always feel like a sunny day – even on those soggy, rainy mornings or freezing cold winter days.



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On those occasions when a child is having a bad morning – whether it’s a meltdown, dropping something, forgetting something in the car just as it pulls away – Amy is right there with a helping hand, filled with patience, kindness and reassurance. When you see that smile or hear those cheerful words, you know her love for these children and families is genuine.

And sometimes it’s the parent who is having the bad day! Many of us know or can remember what it was like on those hectic mornings as we try to get the kids ready and out the door on our way to work. How wonderful for those parents to realize their children are being cared for in a place where they are welcome, safe and loved!

Amy is so modest about her positive impact on the people around her. On those occasions when a parent or fellow staff member or student thanks Amy for her kindness, her humble response says it all when she says, “It’s for the kids.”

Yes it is! But today, the applause is for Amy Thomas, our DCPS Kids First Customer Service award winner!

NOTE TO MEDIA

We invite you to see these 2019 DCPS Kids First Award winners in action. To schedule interviews, contact DCPS Public Information Officer Lora Wimsatt at (270) 852-7000 ext. 215 or Lora.Wimsatt@daviess.kyschools.us

PHOTOGRAPHS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST