



Second Annual  
*Teacher Appreciation and  
Recognition Reception*

Wednesday, May 23, 2018



*In partnership with*





RIO RANCHO

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Igniting Student Potential

## Teacher Appreciation and Recognition Reception

### Program

Welcome and Introductions

Remarks: Dr. V. Sue Cleveland, RRPS Superintendent of Schools

Remarks: Anita Sanchez and Aaron Piñon, Sanchez & Piñon Law Firm (Teacher Appreciation Sponsors)

Recognition and Prize Drawing:  
Teacher Appreciation Award Winners

Thank you and good evening!

**Special  
Thanks!**

Dr. Sue Carley  
Jana Chenault  
Beth Pendergrass  
Courtney Rogers  
Veronica Sanders  
Claudia Valdez  
Kim Vesely  
Sodexo

# Teacher Appreciation Award Recipients

## Preschool:



### Mary Cunningham, Shining Stars Preschool

"She's firm, but warm. Focused, yet flexible. To quote Mary Poppins, "practically perfect in every way."

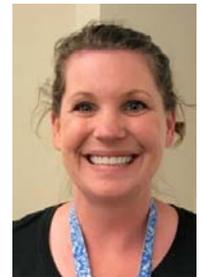
"Mrs. Cunningham can be found with two students stuck to her hands at any given moment. . . . She doesn't make any student feel out of place and those a little delayed (as my daughter was) do not even realize that they are."

## Elementary Schools:

### Ryalin Hughes, Cielo Azul Elementary

"She made learning come alive on a project called dead word and verbs . . . by acting out the word turning it into fun learning and even getting some laughs out of us."

"She always communicates with parents through email for something as simple as her taking a sick day. Not very many teachers do that! She's so awesome that even during school break she send emails to check on our kids . . . She is a great example of what a teacher should be."



### Audra Allen, Colinas del Norte Elementary

"She is a great teacher not stopping at anything to prevent her students from learning."

"She always tells them right from wrong and the consequences from their actions."

"She tries very hard not to let problems linger, often she'll even give her lunch to sit with students to hear their sides of a story in order to find common ground."

"My teacher, basically is our second mom!"

"... she has always been there on my bad days. So Mrs. Allen is the best teacher a kid could ask for."

### Tammy Sunstrom, Enchanted Hills Elementary

"Miss Sun refers to her class as a family and my child feels comfortable, loved, respected, and important when she's at school. Ms. Sun . . . encourages giving compliments using compliment sticks. (The children are each handed a Popsicle stick with another child's name on it. They take turns complimenting the classmate whose name is on the stick). I wish all children were being taught the importance of kindness and how far it can go."



### Karen Curley, Ernest Stapleton Elementary

"This teacher is an example of integrity, leadership and compassion . . . Mrs. Curley makes every day an adventure. My kids have each come home each day and talked about how much fun they had learning that day. . . I go to work every day so comfortable knowing that Mrs. Curley is the person with my child, taking care of her, loving her and teaching her just like I would myself."

# Teacher Appreciation Award Recipients

## Elementary Schools:

### Ben Steiner, Maggie Cordova Elementary

"Every week I hear enthusiastic stories from my son about how he is challenged in class."  
"My son's test scores specifically have increased drastically, particularly his math scores."  
"Students love him because he cares. He is kind, loving, fun, and gives every child the opportunity to succeed."



### Katilin Kleist, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary

"She made it a point to communicate with me some behavioral patterns she was starting to see . . . She suggested some ways of trying to make [my son] feel better about things. That showed me she really does pay attention to each child and only wants what's best for them."  
"She makes me so grateful to know that someone is on my son's side and is truly going above and beyond to help him succeed."

### Charmaine Salazar, Puesta del Sol Elementary

"She doesn't let her students slack - she expects a lot - but she also shows the children that they are capable of what she expects and then some . . . I feel confident in Dade's ability to transition to middle school because of how she has prepared him . . . He's blazing through a large chapter book every week and I believe that's because his thirst for knowledge is so great because of his amazing teacher. We will never forget what she's done for him."



### Jenny Salgado, Rio Rancho Elementary

"She and the other 5th grade teachers have really emphasized to the students that this is the time of schooling to start thinking about different careers. Lauren has been exposed to doctors, engineers, military officers, police officers, and many other possible career paths . . . It really got my daughter thinking about what her future might hold, and how her current studies might lead to a future job."

### Charles Brenden, Sandia Vista Elementary

"My daughter comes home daily excited about her work in class as well as eager to return the next day due to the excitement . . . this teacher provides by making standard teaching original, and extraordinary."  
"He works well with the kids and knows how to build them up and help them gain self-confidence . . . I especially like the way he includes the parents in all that happens in the classroom."



## Elementary Schools:



### Susie Knox, Vista Grande Elementary

"Not only does she personally exemplify what I believe to be as one of the top teachers in the country, she also academically pushes her students to learn in big ways with extremely high expectations. She brings light and sunshine to the entire school."

"I truly cannot write enough to sing Ms. Knox's praises and the difference she has made in my son's life and the lives of hundreds of others over the years."

## Middle Schools:

### Shana Speicher, Eagle Ridge Middle School

"She developed a three-week boot camp this past summer to support and prepare students entering high school algebra in 8th grade. My daughter's experience has been phenomenal. Not only has she been able to keep up with the difficult material, she increased her math score on the baseline NWEA for math for the first time in her life.

Ms. Speicher instills confidence in her students and encourages them to reach for the stars."



### Ashley Gomez, Lincoln Middle School

"Mrs. Gomez talks with her students like they are her friends and equals. She tells us stories that make learning interesting and memorable. She gives us fun activities that help us gain a deeper understanding."

"Ms. Gomez always makes sure her students understand the lesson before continuing on with any other assignments."

"She . . . always asks if people are okay when they seem/look sad."

### Karin Beech-Pond, Mountain View Middle School

"Coach consistently lets students participate at their own pace. She arranges for the students to team up, while keeping the teams as evenly matched as possible, in traditional sports (i.e. softball & volleyball), and more unusual ones like ultimate frisbee, promoting friendly competition. My daughter, not previously athletically-inclined, has experienced such a self-esteem boost!"



### Andrew Vela, Rio Rancho Middle School

"His ability to take children with behavioral issues and mold them into respectable young men is quite amazing. My son went from mostly F's . . . to making the honor roll and being a . . . responsible young man at home . . . Mr. Vela doesn't accept that a young man is only the bad choices he may have made in the past. He expects so much more from his students and he gets that through hard work and respect."

# Teacher Appreciation Award Recipients

## High Schools:

### Amy Guzie, Independence High School

"She has done so much for her students that we see her as a mother figure in our life. I appreciate everything that she has done for me 'cause I honestly would have thought of giving up, and she lets me know all the time that I can do it and I should do it not only for my daughter but for myself. I love this teacher so much that she will always be someone important in my and my daughter's life."



### Patty Wormington, Rio Rancho Cyber Academy

"She is extremely helpful and stays after hours to tutor students for free, she also tutors students for free on Fridays. She also is great at explaining content in multiple ways."

"There have been times I didn't understand the work, and within 10 minutes of her helping me I knew exactly what I needed to do and how to do it."

### Gael Natal, Rio Rancho High School

"Mrs. Natal has always been there for me, for the last three years always helping me with school, socializing, and making friends. Without her I would not know what I want to do with my life going forward. She has been such a positive influence in my life and I can't thank her enough for what she has done for me."



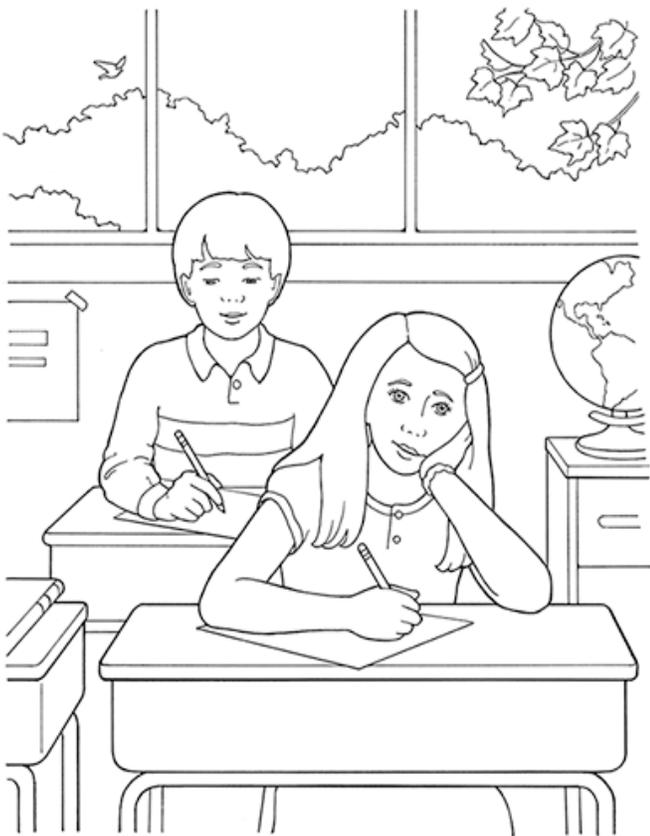
### Azure Dorsey, V. Sue Cleveland High School

"Ms. Dorsey doesn't just teach; she gets engaged and allows us to enjoy learning. Ms. Dorsey cares about students because she always makes sure we understand the work, and if we don't, she will explain it more in-depth for us."

*It takes a big heart to help shape little minds.*

*--Unknown*

## About the Teacher Appreciation Program



Teacher Appreciation honorees were chosen based upon nominations submitted by students, parents, and colleagues at each teacher's school. The nominations were reviewed by a committee including the program's sponsors from the Sanchez and Piñon Law Firm, principals from each grade level, and members of the RRPS Communications, Strategic Planning, and Engagement Office. The committee makes recommendations to the sponsors, who then make the final decision on the recipient.

The chosen teachers were "surprised" at a staff meeting at their school, where members of the selection committee recognized all of the nominated teachers from that school and presented the award to the chosen recipient.

The committee and sponsors thank all of the parents, students, and colleagues who submitted nominations. Any of the teachers nominated would have been worthy winners, and the committee had to make some tough choices. All nominated teachers receive a copy of the nomination form so they can see how truly appreciated they are.

Congratulations to all of the nominees!

*A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.*

*—Henry Adams*

