

APPLICANT INFORMATION FORM

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Stephanie Terry

Name

9th-12th

Current Grade Level(s) Taught

AP US History, Journalism, Photojournalism, Yearbook

Current Subject(s) Taught

9

Years in Current Position

24

Total Years of Teaching Experience

After living in Central Asia for 8 years, I speak survivor Russian and Uighur

Languages Other than English Spoken Fluently

Areas of National Board Certification Achieved or In Progress:

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Midwest City - Del City

School District

Del City High School

School Name

1300

School Size

14,000

District Size

Public

School Demographic

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

List all below, most recent first.

EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

College or University	Dates Attended	Degree Earned (i.e., B.A. in Math)
University of Central Oklahoma	2007-2012	M.Ed in Secondary Education Content Area Social Studies
Oklahoma Baptist University	1988-1992	B.S.E. Sec. Social Studies Ed. Endorsement: English

Midwest City High School	Midwest City	OK	73110
Name of High School Attended	City	State	ZIP Code

EMPLOYMENT RECORD OF SERVICE (Include grade level and/or subject area)

School District	Position Held	Dates
Mid-Del	Del City High School: APUSH, US History, Journalism, Photojournalism, Yearbook	2012-Present
Mid-Del	Kerr Middle School: 8th Language Arts, Yearbook	2008-2012
Tien Shan International	Almaty, KZ: 7-12 History and Language Arts	2000-2007
Mid-Del	Monroney JH: 7th Geo, 8th US History, Humanities, YE	1993-1999
Oklahoma City	Capitol Hill HS: 9th English, World History	1992-1993

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS (Include offices held and/or other relevant activities)

Membership	Position Held	Dates
JEA: Journalism Educ.	Member	2013-Present
OK Scholastic Media	Member/Presenter Fall Media Monday	2014-Present
AP Mentor Program	Participant	2017-2018
Org. of Am. Historians	Member	2015-2017
Phi Alpha Theta	Member National History Society	2008-2012
Kappa Delta Pi	Member National Education Honor Society	1990-1992

LEADERSHIP IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT (Include leadership in the training of future teachers)

Title	Position Held	Dates
Junior PLC at DCHS	Chair/Member	2017-Present
Mid-Del YB Chair	Organize/lead district yearbook adviser workshops	2017-Present
Walsworth Mentor	Mentor Walsworth yearbook advisers in state	2016-2018
US History CFA Comm	Worked to write assessment questions for site	2014=2017
District SS Curriculum	Committee member	2013
8th Grade Team Leader	Kerr MS - coordinated meetings	2009-2012
Chair Social Studies Dept	Tien Shan: designed curriculum and trained teachers	2000-2007
9th Humanities Curr.	Designed humanities curriculum for school district plan	1996-1999

AWARDS AND OTHER RECOGNITION OF TEACHING

Title	Dates
Mid-Del District Teacher of the Year	2020
Del City High School Teacher of the Year	2019-2020
Oklahoma Scholastic Media Sweepstakes Yearbook Award	2017-2019
Oklahoma Scholastic Media Diversity Award	2019
All-American Yearbook Ranking National Scholastic Press Association	2016
Recipient Oklahoma Scholastic Media Initiative Grant	2016
Site Teacher of the Year Nominee Del City HS and Kerr MS	2015, '10, '08
Rocky Mountain Education Research Association Poster Presentation	2012
We the People Conference Attendee	1993

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Limit all following responses to spaces provided.

PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY

What were the factors that influenced you to become a teacher?

Describe what you consider to be your greatest contributions and accomplishments in education.

When I graduated with my education degree, my family reminded me of stories about my academic journey. My grandmother told me she always thought I would be a teacher ever since she watched me play “school” with my stuffed animals. I do not remember those imaginary dramas. In fact, I recall different career aspirations. I first wanted to be an author like Judy Blume or Beverly Cleary, then a doctor, next a preacher or a musician with a contemporary Christian band. Finally, as college neared - I decided a lawyer, politician or diplomat was what I wanted to become.

In actuality, I had several experiences that showed me that I was called to teach. Although I am generally a reserved and quiet person, I loved projects that required me to present new information. As a sophomore, my honors English teacher, Ms. Callie Fieldcamp, required us to prepare and teach a lesson on a short story. We were required to include elements that dealt with Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development and Bloom’s Taxonomy. I no longer remember the short story I taught, but I remember that I loved it. I loved being in front of the class; I loved planning questions to ask; I loved leading the discussion and hearing my classmates’ opinions, and finally, I loved that everyone “got” it...my classmates learned something and my teacher thought I did a great job.

Teaching the short story lesson was not my first experience helping people learn. As the first chair clarinet player at Monroney Junior High, I auditioned for the regional honor band. Additionally, I helped several other clarinet players learn their parts for the audition. We worked together multiple times during lunch and after school. Although my band director was confident that I would make the band, I had a terrible case of nerves and failed miserably; I did not make it past the first round. However, each of the players I helped made the honor band. I was disappointed, but I took comfort in knowing I helped others achieve their goals.

Despite the numerous opportunities to teach, whether by helping others on clarinet, tutoring in my classes, or leading in small groups at church, I did not realize I was called to teach until the summer before I went to college. While on a mission trip leading backyard Bible clubs in some of the housing projects in Tampa Bay, Florida, I was working with a girl who was about nine. We were trying to read some material written on a first or second grade level. The girl could not read the story. My heart broke and I knew at that moment what I was called to do. I was called to teach.

I have been a classroom teacher for over twenty years and though at times I may have become weary, I have never doubted that calling. Olympic runner and missionary to China, Eric Liddell once said, “When I run, I feel God’s pleasure.” I am consistently reminded that God made me for a purpose; He gifted me as a teacher and when I teach, I feel His pleasure.

My greatest accomplishments are my students and the skills and confidence they acquire in my classes. My students may not all pass their AP US history exam, but they should leave with the belief and supporting experiences that with diligence, they can master any task set before them. A couple of years ago, I was thrilled when one of my journalism students left me a note simply saying, "Thank you for giving me the courage to write." I remember working with a student who struggled using specifics to support her arguments. After working for nearly two hours together on a sample AP essay question, she was packing up to meet her mom, and said, "Mrs. Terry, I can do this. I may still need some of your help next time, but I think it will be easier." This fall, one of my yearbook students who I have taught for three years won a first-place award at Oklahoma Scholastic Media's annual yearbook competition and she had one of her photos published in the Midwest City Beacon. This is significant because as a freshman she struggled. She really wanted to be in yearbook and after an interview with me I chose her to be a part of Eagle Press. As a sophomore she struggled to stay academically eligible, complete her yearbook assignments and get good photos at events. I started shadowing her more closely at photography events and going with her on some yearbook interviews – modeling for her how to ask questions, record the answers, and then having her do the interviews on her own. She listened and followed my instructions. Gradually, she developed her own style of photography and successfully completed her yearbook assignments. She is now a junior and while we were driving to a football game, I told her how proud I was of her grades and her yearbook work. She responded that each year she just seems to learn a little bit more how to do better in life. That is my goal as an educator – for my students to have the skills and determination to continually improve and be excellent in whatever they pursue.

My other goal has been to promote my students, faculty, and school. When I accepted the yearbook adviser position at Del City, I noticed next to my office some old, yellowed certificates from yearbook contests in the early 1980s. I decided that I wanted to establish a new tradition of excellence in scholastic journalism and show the community that DCHS had amazing students who were doing great things. My Eagle Press kids have done this. We make it to numerous events like games, drama productions, community service events, and ROTC competitions. We post photos on social media. We display pictures in the halls of the school and watch the students' reactions. Del City has gained a reputation for excellent scholastic journalism. For the third year in a row, we won Sweepstakes at the Oklahoma Scholastic Media state yearbook competition. Sweepstakes is the number one yearbook in our division for the entire state. Additionally, our yearbook won the Diversity Award. I was most excited about this award because it was the goal of my staff. The kids decided that they wanted to produce a book that represented all the kids at Del City, so our theme was "Every One Counts." When the head of OSM announced the results, she explained that the judges had never had a book that so clearly met the requirements and purpose. My Eagle Press kids had demonstrated how every person at Del City matters.

As a teacher, I get to do what I was created and called to do. I get to interact with students each day. I get to talk with them about the fascinating events in history. I challenge them to write their stories and the stories of their classmates. I give them the skills to visually capture the daily events at Del City High School. I equip them to accomplish the tasks that life sets before them.

PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

Describe your personal feelings and beliefs about teaching, including your own ideas of what makes an outstanding teacher. Describe the rewards you find in teaching. How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in your personal teaching style?

As the cold war ended in 1990, President George Bush challenged the University of Texas' graduating class "to make the most of our changing world, to take risks to do something extraordinary: Whatever you do, live a life of adventure and meaning so brilliant that like a Roman candle, it lights up the world. Dazzle us. Astonish us. Be extraordinary!" That is my goal as an educator. I want to challenge my students to make a difference. I want to equip them to light up their world and be extraordinary at whatever they pursue.

The ideal of a Renaissance education where students develop both a love of learning and learn to improve and serve their community focuses my teaching. I want my students to be excellent both in knowledge and in kindness. I desire for my classroom to be a place where my students know they are respected and loved. Whether it is history, journalism, or yearbook, my students should leave my class knowing they are valuable and that they have learned and practiced the skills needed to succeed in life. While the content knowledge needed in the future may change, the learning, literacy, and life skills students develop in my class should prepare them for life's challenges.

In order to prepare my students, I must continually strive to become an outstanding teacher that guides, mentors, and encourages them daily. I must be an expert in my field so that I can best communicate the knowledge my students need. I must continually learn new ideas and teaching techniques so that I may expose my kids to new information and experiences as well as reach their varied learning styles. In order to stay current with content and effective learning techniques, I attend AP Institutes and journalism workshops. I have been involved in mentor programs both as the mentor and the mentee. I also exchange advice and ideas with colleagues around the state and nation through involvement in professional organizations like the Journalism Educators Association.

In addition to being an expert in my content areas, I must also model and teach qualities of a lifelong learner. I must challenge my students to ask difficult questions and then help them in create solutions for the problems that society faces. I love history and journalism. I get excited telling the stories of people and their struggles, but I realize my students must know more than the stories. They must interact with different and opposing viewpoints. They must use their knowledge of events to examine causation, make comparisons, and discover the trends and changes over time. Recently, my AP US history class studied the civil rights movement. Using a hybrid model of a flipped classroom, the kids read and took notes on the civil rights struggle. We then discussed the events by looking at photos and watching short video clips of the events like the protests in Birmingham. The students then read two speeches, one from Dr. Martin Luther King and the other by Malcolm X. After reading the speeches and writing an analysis, the class came together for a seminar to discuss how civil rights and the American dream could be achieved for all people. Finally, the students spent a class period interviewing our school counselor, Mrs. Joy Ahmad, who was a student during the 1960s and whose father was an NAACP leader. Throughout the unit my

students learned new content; they examined their reasoning about the civil rights struggle and worked together to reconcile the different beliefs about the best way to achieve equality.

Above all, in order to be an outstanding teacher, I must love my students and create a classroom where they know they are accepted and valued. In my class, students are encouraged to ask questions; they may laugh and they are free to try new things and fail but taught not to quit, but rather try again so that ultimately they may use their new knowledge and skills to produce excellent work. Whatever the situation, my students know that I care about each of them as individuals. I set the tone for each day, and I want it to be one of excitement and optimism. My students sometimes ask me why I always smile and greet them by name each day. It is because I want them to know that I am happy to see them, and I am excited to be at school teaching. When the unexpected happens in the classroom, like the wi-fi going out when we were going to research on laptops, I get to model for my students how to react. We may throw up our hands, laugh a bit, and then go with plan B, C, or D. Each day, I look for opportunities to show my students that I care about them. I take the time to ask how their grandmother who has been in the hospital is doing. I listen to them at lunch as they read portions of their draft for their fantasy novel. I listen as they ask me technical questions about new camera lens processing speeds. I travel to swim meets to take pictures and give them encouragement and I even bake their favorite red velvet cookies that they remember me bringing when they were freshmen. With all the turmoil around my students, they must be assured that I have high expectations for them, that I am there for them and that I love them.

As an educator, there is nothing more rewarding than when a former student tells me that I made a difference in their life. Perhaps it was that I helped them learn to love history so that they are studying to earn their PhD in history or I was their yearbook adviser and they got so excited about journalism that they became a free-lance writer and journalism professor. I am especially moved when students let me know that I made a difference in their lives because they knew even in some of their darkest days that I cared for and believed in them, and that kept them going. The reward in teaching is knowing that I have equipped my students with skills and confidence so that they can light up their world.

EDUCATION ISSUES AND TRENDS

What do you consider to be the major public education issues we face today? Address them in depth, outlining possible causes, effects, and resolutions.

When I turn on the news, listen to a presidential debate, or visit with my friends, most will agree that public schools are in a state of crisis. Big problems confront educators, government officials, families, and communities. A few of those issues include poverty, trauma, class size, student attitudes, bullying, parental involvement, high stakes testing, chronic absenteeism, safety, and lack of funding. These problems are not merely hypothetical or just national issues; they are difficulties teachers at my school face on a regular basis.

We deal with students who come from families living below the poverty line – kids who come to school hungry and students who are working almost full-time jobs after school in order to help pay bills. Many of my colleagues teach six periods of core classes a day with around 30 students in each class. A class load of around 180 kids makes it difficult to do the cool science labs, or interactive English or history projects. Yet, most of my colleagues rise to the challenge and do the projects because they know the students benefit when learning is engaging and memorable. Even issues like safety have become more real, as my school has had to deal with incidents of weapons being present on school grounds. These chronic and daunting problems in education create an environment in public schools where teachers and students face unhealthy amounts of pressure and stress. Two recent studies from the University of Missouri reported that 94% of middle school teachers and 93% of elementary teachers have high levels of stress. In order to deal with the pressures of the classroom, teachers often disengage or leave the profession. Students facing chronic stress often have chronic absences, demonstrate behavioral issues, have lower academic achievement and suffer from depression. Student and teacher stresses feed each other and create a vicious cycle that damages both academic achievement as well as the emotional and social well being of the student and teacher.

Educators, researchers and officials have proposed many ideas for alleviating student and teacher pressures. It is essential that teachers have adequate resources and support for both their ideas and management of their classrooms. If we fail to support our teachers, then we risk damaging our students. Possible ways to lessen some of the stresses on students may be an adjustment of homework policies, class schedules, or even school start times. As a classroom teacher, I may not be able to solve problems like poverty or education funding, but I can cultivate a class and school environment where both teachers and students are part of a tight knit community that will help alleviate some of the pressures of education

In my classroom, I do several things to build a sense of community and let my students know that they are valued and loved. I set aside time each day to greet all my students and listen to them and learn about their interests and concerns. In yearbook, we come together almost every day around the table and go over the upcoming events and tasks. Additionally, once or twice a week we share our “smiles” or accomplishments. Often during these times around the table, the students will share

some of their struggles and worries. Recently, one student shared her worries about her first kiss with her new boyfriend. The kids offered appropriate and fun remarks, and then we all laughed and celebrated when she came back and told us about the awkward and memorable moment. This intentional time nurtures relationships and builds community. It helps both me and my students deal with the stresses of education and allows us to refocus on the positive aspects of the school day.

As a school, we have begun to incorporate a few ideas to build community and decrease the sense of isolation and stress. We have started an advisory group where each teacher has around 15 students that they meet with several times over the year to discuss relevant issues, concerns, and plan for future goals. We have been more intentional in celebrating all groups of students in assemblies and on social media. We have provided spaces for students to get away and be quiet when the pressure is too much.

Finally, from my experience and my research I believe another way to build a positive community within our schools is for both teachers and students to be involved in extracurricular activities. I know that some students and teachers have too much activity and they need to evaluate and cut out the excess. However, research shows that interactions between students and teachers outside of the classroom creates a closer relationship and has numerous benefits. Students become more resilient, develop socially and emotionally, and have a higher likelihood of academic success. Teachers develop more insight into students' lives and thinking as well as more empathy and respect for them. Involvement in extracurricular activities gives the teacher and student the opportunity to belong to a group and achieve success and public recognition together. Building a sense of community and family is one of the most effective ways I work to combat the stressors and pressure of public education for both students and teachers.

THE TEACHING PROFESSION

What do you do to strengthen and improve the teaching profession?

What is and/or what should be the basis for accountability in the teaching profession?

The teaching profession has been under fire for several decades. Politicians, community members, and educators have searched for the best ways to keep teachers accountable to their students and community. Officials thought that high stakes testing was the way to improve student achievement and teacher accountability, but the consensus nationwide is that testing fails as the primary measure of teaching and student achievement. As a teacher, passionate about the importance of education to individuals and society, I work to strengthen my profession and encourage others to support and possibly enter the field of education. I strive to do excellently in all aspects of my role as teacher, and I want to be held accountable based on how I teach and interact with my students as well as be evaluated based on how they learn and improve.

I seek to improve the education profession by collaborating with and encouraging other teaching professionals. I help facilitate our junior level professional learning community. I meet with the other U.S. history teachers to share lesson ideas. Often, we meet informally to swap success stories and sometimes we share our frustration with the lessons that failed and then we try to figure out how to fix it. The AP English teacher and I often coordinate our readings and themes, so that the students are exposed to skills and concepts multiple times and in a variety of ways. I attend workshops for teaching AP U.S. history, journalism, and yearbook so that I stay up-to-date and I gain new information and encouragement from teachers around the state and nation. Additionally, I have taught workshops for yearbook and photography as well as served as a mentor for new yearbook advisers in the state. I believe an important aspect of being an education professional is collaboration and encouragement.

In my classroom, I am continually working to improve my teaching and help my kids learn and achieve more. Sometimes this means I step back and analyze what I have been doing and change. For instance, last spring, after teaching AP US history for four years and seeing the percentage of students passing the exam increase, I realized that my current group of kids were not going to do as well. I had a sense of this before exam scores were in, so in May I talked to my kids to ask them what would help. Then, I reflected on the year and my teaching, and I spoke with my colleagues. I began to formulate a plan and then talked with my principal. We decided to restructure the course in order to capture the students' interest and build enthusiasm by getting them familiar with new and more recent information sooner. Instead of starting with exploration and colonization and moving forward, I chose to start the class after the Civil War like the on-level history classes. Rather than having to rush through the new knowledge of the 20th century, my classes have been able to delve deeper into the issues and topics that they are interested in like the Twenties or the struggle for civil rights. Since the students had much of the earlier information in 8th grade, I was still able to encourage them to build connections throughout American history. Now my AP classes are studying the earlier time periods, but we can make it more review and practice for developing writing and historical thinking skills. Already, I have seen improvement in my students' enthusiasm about history

as well as improvement in their discussions, writing, and test taking. I am anticipating much better results when they take the AP exam in May.

In addition to restructuring my AP class, I strive for excellence in my daily teaching methods. Much of my focus in teaching involves helping my students deepen and revise their knowledge as well as challenging them to examine their reasoning and ultimately, practice independently the skills they have learned. In history and journalism, my students often debate controversial topics or positions. They work together in groups to come up with responses and then present their claims to the class. My students know that they will be asked to elaborate and further justify their reasoning. Recently, we read John Winthrop's "City on a Hill" speech. It was exciting to listen as the kids made the connection with the ideals of a Christian Puritan community and then the failure of that community during the Salem Witch Trials. Photojournalism is a new semester class for me to teach. After the first semester, I realized I needed better routines, goals, and ways to track and celebrate student successes. In the class, we now have ways to decide who gets what camera and what group is working on different aspects of a project. In our most recent unit on lighting, my students have become more confident with the DSLR cameras, have begun helped each other with the lighting equipment and celebrated the cool, fun shots.

I believe my contributions to the teaching profession can be measured by the achievements of my students. I am overjoyed by the state and national recognition my yearbook students have earned the past few years. I am anticipating more of my AP U.S. history students passing their AP exam or earning As in their university history classes. I love it when my journalism students come and share with me the stories they are writing with interesting angles. Most importantly, I know I have strengthened the teaching profession when students return years later to thank me and tell me that I helped inspire them to choose their current profession and that I equipped them with some of the knowledge and skills they needed to succeed.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Describe your commitment to your community through service-oriented activities including volunteer work, civic responsibilities, and other group activities.

Since returning to the United States in 2007 after living in Central Asia, I have served my community through my activities at church, my role as an involved parent at my sons' schools and the use of my skills as a yearbook teacher to go the extra mile for my students and their families.

Over the past decade I have served in numerous roles at my church. I have been both a youth and adult Sunday school teacher. I have taught in Vacation Bible School and served as a youth sponsor for numerous activities. Since I love music, I have sung in the choir, played in the orchestra and rung in the hand bell choir. Most recently, I put my photography skills to use by photographing some of the children's events and helping them publicize on social media.

Additionally, I have spent time volunteering in various roles at my sons' schools. While my youngest was in elementary school, I served as the parent representative on the Title I committee. Both my boys were involved in band and/or choir during middle and high school, so I was an active member of the booster clubs working in the concession stand and volunteering for other roles. I also served as the high school band boosters' secretary for a couple of years. Currently, I am part of the choir and theater booster clubs. My husband and I enjoy fixing meals for the drama students during their long rehearsals for upcoming plays.

Perhaps, the way I show the greatest commitment to the Mid-Del community is through my work as the yearbook adviser at Del City High School. I make it a point to attend many of the student activities and events. My student photographers and I work to get great shots of a diverse group of students being involved in their school and community. We photograph at most of the sporting events, musical concerts, ROTC competitions, leadership activities, volunteer events and theater performances. I then spend the time to edit the photos and put the best looking shots out on social media. I do this for a couple of reasons. First, I want my students and their families to have access to great pictures that capture those incredible memories of high school. Additionally, I want the community to see and be able to brag about the amazing students at Del City on a regular basis. This spring in the midst of the Covid crisis, I got to step up my commitment to the Del City community. Since our seniors did not get to have a traditional graduation, our district built a backdrop for parents and students to take selfies with when they came up to pick up their diploma covers. After discussing it with our principal, the student council and senior class advisers, I decided to volunteer my time to take photos of the students in their cap and gown. My older son and I spent two days photographing the seniors in the cap and gown both with the backdrop and outside individually and with their families. It was important to me that each graduate have a professional quality picture in their cap and gown to celebrate their accomplishment. Rather than charging for the pictures, I posted all the edited photos on social media so the families had access to the pictures and the community could celebrate the accomplishments of the class of 2020.

One of my mentors wisely reminded me while I was studying to be a teacher that "to whom much is given, much is required." Since then, in all my activities I seek to use my talents and gifts to be a light and a service to my community.

OKLAHOMA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

As the Teacher of the Year, you will serve as a spokesperson and representative for teachers and students. What is your message? What will you communicate to your profession and to the public?

I love stories. More so, I am passionate about the people whose lives are the subject of the stories. I love teaching history because I get to find out about people and tell how they shaped and responded to the events happening around them. As a photographer and journalist, I get to capture the moments in peoples' lives and tell their unique story. I believe as educators and as a community we must be passionate about our students' stories. We must be committed to recognizing that all of our students have a story that is worthwhile and needs recognition. We must also provide our students with the tools they need to make their stories extraordinary.

People have a basic need to be connected and know that they have value and worth to others. Our students desire to be recognized and told that they matter. As a yearbook adviser, I attend lots of school events. Some of those events are jam-packed with people; others may only have a few in attendance. What a difference it makes to those students when they know that they matter to someone and that a person is coming, specifically, to see them perform or compete. I will never forget when I went to watch one of my students play basketball for the JV girls' team. My presence and calling her name during the game made such a difference to her that she ordered me a basketball shirt - she wanted me to have it when I came to the games. I had become her person that she could count on to cheer for her and I certainly made sure to wear that shirt on game days. As a community, we need to be aware of the activities that our students are involved in and we need to go and support them. I think a "Biggest Fan" type program where individuals in the local community choose a student to support when they perform or compete is highly needed. Kids can do so much when they know that they have at least one person who cares about them; a person applauding them and watching their personal story unfold.

In addition to recognizing our students' diverse stories and interests, we must diligently provide them with the tools they need to make their life story extraordinary. By extraordinary, I do not mean that they will be famous and wealthy. Rather, they will live their lives filled with confidence and purpose and pursue excellence in all their activities. In order to attain this, our students must be taught the skills and given the opportunity to develop the traits needed to thrive in our ever-changing world. We must challenge our students with difficult tasks and then come alongside them to help them master the task. We must teach them that it is okay to fail, but not to quit. We must help them learn from failures and keep improving. We must hold them to a standard of excellence and teach them that deadlines and difficulties are a part of life; but, how wonderful it is, once a task is completed and finished well. As a yearbook adviser, we live by deadlines. Last year, my staff decided to focus on the diversity of our school. They had lofty ideas for the book. We attended a regional workshop on theme development and my kids took some harsh criticism for their vague and overdone copy and designs. They were crushed, but with some encouragement, they took the criticism and improved. They did so well that the book won the Diversity Award from Oklahoma Scholastic Media. My kids learned to build on their failure and not quit. Communities and educators must provide students with knowledge, skills, and practice, so that they have the confidence and the tenacity to create remarkable stories out of their lives.

SHARE A LESSON

Describe a lesson or unit that defines you as a teacher. How did you engage all students in the learning, and how did that learning influence your students? How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in this lesson or unit?

My ultimate desire as a teacher is to challenge my students to light up their world and make a difference where they live. In AP US History I taught a unit over the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s that allowed my students to connect with the people and events of the time as well providing them an opportunity to examine the issues of today.

My students began by building their knowledge by reading and taking notes at home over the key people, events, and issues. Over the course of the year, I have taught them to read and look for connections and why events are significant. These are the things they write in their notes so we can discuss them when they come to class. On the first day of the unit, my students wrote a practice thesis evaluating the cause of the resurgence of the Civil Rights movement. We then watched a video clip of newsreel footage and photos from the period. We used many of those photos to guide our discussions of the movement. The kids really connected with the images, especially those of the students in Birmingham being sprayed with fire hoses and attacked by police dogs. Since I am a journalism teacher and I believe all the subjects connect, I was pleased when my students noted the importance of the media coverage and how it helped to increase the public's willingness to end segregation. After the first day's discussion, I gave my classes two primary sources to read for a seminar. They read and responded to contrasting viewpoints from Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.

For our seminar, we moved to my yearbook room where we all gather around a set of tables and face each other for a student-led discussion. The students had a set of questions that I had given them earlier. They knew that everyone must add to the discussion. The students struggled because they recognized the strength of each man's argument and that there were no easy solutions to obtaining equality and changing society's attitudes. While at times, they disagreed with each other, they practiced good listening and discussion skills by waiting and not talking over each other. The students leading also ensured that each person had an opportunity to speak. The kids recognized that there was not an easy or quick solution, even today. As they left, a couple of my students stopped to tell me that they really liked Dr. King's ideal of peaceful protest, but they totally understood how Malcolm X thought a revolution needed to happen.

I believe it is essential for my students to connect with history personally, so on the last day of the unit, I asked our school counselor to come and share her experiences as a student in the 1960s. Her father had been an NAACP leader and Dr. King had visited her home. My students prepared questions and were engaged as Mrs. Joy Ahmad spoke. In fact, they were reluctant to leave when the bell rang. I knew the kids had connected and history was real to them, when one of the girls paused before she left and said, "Mrs. Terry, I never really imagined what it felt like to be a kid then, until Mrs. Ahmad talked about the teacher patting her on the head and saying 'your people.' I couldn't have done it."

As the events of the early summer unfolded in Minneapolis and around the country, my students, informed by history, were more prepared to take a stand for the rights of people and to make a difference in their community. I am excited that I have helped equip my students with some of the skills and knowledge to be a light and an instrument of change in our society.

January 29, 2020

To Whom it may concern,

I am more than pleased to write this letter honoring Mrs. Stephanie Terry. I have had the privilege of knowing her since August of 2016, when my daughter, Julie, was enrolled in her freshman journalism class.

Mrs. Terry was the first teacher at Del City High School I met. Upon meeting her, I could tell she was a warm and caring teacher. It immediately calmed any fears I had about Julie starting her freshman year of high school.

Mrs. Terry has been, and still is, instrumental in Julie's life. Julie has been in Mrs. Terry's yearbook class since her sophomore year. Mrs. Terry pushes Julie in many beneficial directions. She encourages Julie as a writer and sees things in her that Julie fails to see in herself.

As the Editor of the Eagle Press, Julie has many responsibilities, most of which Julie doesn't always want. Mrs. Terry pushes Julie to succeed and always lifts her up if she has short-comings, just like a parent would do. From what I have seen, she is like a second mom to many of her students, not just Julie.

Mrs. Terry is a confidant and advocate for all of her students. She is always there for them to talk to and offers beneficial advice when needed. It has been a blessing to me knowing she is there for Julie when I cannot be. She is also an exceptional role model for her students. She teaches them to be individuals and not worry about what others think. She treats everyone she meets with love and respect.

Mrs. Terry goes above and beyond for DCHS. You can almost always find her at all the extra curricular events. Even when it's pouring rain and freezing cold, she will be out on the football field taking pictures, capturing every moment of the game for the students to treasure. The students, staff, and parents are lucky to have such an amazing teacher. DCHS could not have picked a better candidate for Teacher of the Year.

Best Regards,



Melissa Glisson

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Gina Hill
Principal

Home of the Eagles

John Benardello
Assistant Principal
Amanda Stansberry
Assistant Principal

Taylor Upchurch
Assistant Principal
Phillip Crawford
Assistant Principal

August 28, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

A few years ago when I received my copy of the bimonthly Stanford University alumni magazine, a catch phrase on the cover intrigued me and drew my attention to the lead article, "History Detected." The catch phrase, "Forget What You Know About History," says so much about my own view of the teaching of history and the need for more thoughtful explorations and presentations of oft-times sloppy discourses of the past. My first thought was that I must share this article with Stephanie Terry and get her feedback. Why Stephanie? I hope that my discussion of Stephanie Terry as an excellent educator will clearly answer that question.

The Stanford Magazine article presents a summary with numerous examples of application of a teaching method developed at the Stanford Graduate School of Education. The project approach seeks to teach students how to "discover" history for themselves by using original source materials, critically examining evidence and confidently supporting their own conclusions. Sadly, far too many Americans have a severe lack of knowledge of the history of the United States and lack the ability to form sound judgments based on erroneous information. The goal of teaching history is to awaken the curiosity in students in such a way that they passionately "feel" history through the people who experienced, first-hand, the studied events.

Upon entering Stephanie Terry's classroom, it becomes immediately obvious that Stephanie was "called to teach." My office is next door to her classroom, and as the AP Coordinator, I personally observe her teaching several times a month. Her classroom is engaging and stimulating, and I enjoy watching students come alive as they examine pieces of history, form contrasting conclusions, and work to support and/or challenge their perspectives. Hers is an interactive classroom. When presented with documents and pieces of history, Stephanie's students are encouraged to approach the information as if in a scientific lab setting. She urges them to find the "actual voice" of the historical participant and contextualize the information as if they, too, were present. Rather than simply memorizing dates and words, students set about searching for the reasons behind the events in history. By critically examining information, her students develop a sense of curiosity and a desire to know. They become active viewers/investigators; thus, they gain an appreciation for history that enhances retention of historical knowledge.

Oftentimes, Stephanie indicates that she loves stories. She feels strongly that when her students delve into the stories of others, they learn a great deal. Stories create an atmosphere in which students become participants who care to discover the context of events rather than simply the event itself. Through this process of participatory discovery, students learn to think, analyze, argue differing viewpoints, and write about their experiences because they care and are curious. Stephanie's students discover history for themselves and do not accept documents at face value without first applying skills of interpretation and deciphering. They learn to question. These skills of discovery last a lifetime and help develop these thinking young students into conscientious citizens who have a true appreciation for productive insight. Stephanie Terry truly exemplifies a model educator who approaches teaching from the model suggested in the Stanford article. Her students develop skills in exegesis that are great assets in the halls of academia. Stephanie Terry is a great example of a teacher I would wish for my own grandchildren to experience, and I enthusiastically recommend her for Oklahoma Teacher of the Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy A. Ahmad".

Joy A. Ahmad, M.A. Counseling Psychology

Mission Statement

When the young people of Mid-Del enter our schools, they will be **safe**.
When they enter our classrooms, they will be **challenged**.
When they leave our schools, they will be **ready**.

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Julie Glisson and I attended Del City High School from 2016-2020. I was lucky enough to have Mrs Stephanie Terry as a teacher each of those four years. I served as Mrs Terry's Editor In Chief my senior year of high school, was an active member of yearbook all four years, I was in her AP US history class my junior year and in her journalism class my freshman year. It is truly an honor to be recommending Mrs Stephanie Terry for the Oklahoma Teacher Of the Year.

Mrs Terry was so much more than the average high school teacher to me. She taught us about wars, presidents, how to make a spread, how to get that perfect picture during a football game, and how to meet a deadline (which now being a college freshman I realize may have been the most important thing she ever taught). She taught me how to be a leader, and how to focus on the positive aspects of life rather than the negativity that is so easy to get set on. Serving as her editor I was able to work hand in hand with her and I saw those little things she did (as well as the big things) that just set her aside from all the other teachers I had ever had. Mrs Terry kept snacks in her room for those kids who were hungry, she kept extra supplies for the kids who didn't have the money to get their own, all these things were purchased out of her pocket. When someone needed any of those items questions were never asked. She never made anyone feel bad for not having something. The supplies for her class weren't expensive at all because she understood that money can be tight. No student ever leaves her class feeling down about themselves.

Mrs Terry is still to this day the most caring and compassionate teacher I think I will ever have. During my junior year of high school a friend of mine committed suicide, out of everyone who reached out to me she was the only one who helped. She told me it was okay to be sad, it was okay to take time for myself to grieve and heal. She knew I went to church, so she asked me if we could pray about it. That day she took time away from her busy schedule and prayed with me, that moment will forever stand out to me. Teachers don't do that, good teachers don't do that, great teachers don't do that, but that day the BEST teacher did. That was the biggest act of compassion I had ever been shown.

With all of this being said I truly believe that Mrs Stephanie Terry truly deserves the honor of being named Oklahoma's Teacher of the Year. Our school made the best choice naming her the teacher of the year, so did our district, I hope our state can too. Having had her as a teacher and continuing to have her support is one of the biggest blessings I could have ever received.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Glisson".

Julie Glisson