

# APPLICANT INFORMATION FORM

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

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Name

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Current Grade Level(s) Taught

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Current Subject(s) Taught

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Years in Current Position

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Total Years of Teaching Experience

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Languages Other than English Spoken Fluently

Areas of National Board Certification Achieved or In Progress:

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

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School District

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School Name

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School Size

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District Size

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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)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Name of High School Attended	City	State	ZIP Code
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## EMPLOYMENT RECORD OF SERVICE (Include grade level and/or subject area)

School District	Position Held	Dates
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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

Membership	Position Held	Dates
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



## **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.**



## **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?



## **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.



## **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?



## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

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

## **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?

## 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?

June 22, 2020

Dear Selection Committee,

It is an honor to write this letter on behalf of Jessica Eschbach for consideration as a recipient for Oklahoma Teacher of the Year. As Director of Libraries and Instructional Technology for Norman Public Schools (NPS), I have had many opportunities to observe, collaborate with, and supervise Jessica's work with learners. Jessica has made many contributions as a teacher, librarian, leader and technology expert for those at her school and in our district.

Arriving at Kennedy Elementary School in 2018, Jessica immediately began to build relationships with all learners, educators, students, and parents. She brought her exemplary classroom teaching experience, knowledge of school librarianship, and her generous humanity to Kennedy. In 2018, there were twenty-six new teachers at Kennedy. Jessica recognized the need to support new faculty members, as well as veteran teachers by building the understanding that the school librarian and library were necessary, valuable components of the school's community that could both elevate student learning and amplify teaching. In her first year, she was able to collaborate with all new teachers and support veteran teachers. Because of the relationships Jessica has built, classroom educators are open to trying new and innovative ideas, technologies and instructional strategies with her. Jessica has built an environment of trust and community that resonates with all learners.

Jessica is a master teacher who models teaching and management strategies for her colleagues as she teaches. As a new staff member, she immediately brought the first-ever kindergarten inquiry-based unit on animal adaptations and habitats to Kennedy learners. Kindergarteners learned from zoo experts, herpetologists, and print and online resources to help them find answers to their unique inquiry questions. The unit culminated with a showcase where students shared Chatterpix creations with their grade level and inquiry team. As Jessica continues building a culture of deep learning, she and her 4<sup>th</sup> grade team are implementing an inquiry-based unit where all learners demonstrate learning by making a product that gives each student voice and choice. To inspire continual learning, she has connected Kennedy students to many opportunities beyond classroom walls including participating with OU Tech Club, hosting a STEM space at Curriculum Night, opening the Kennedy Russell Westbrook reading room, hosting author/illustrator visits, and initiating 5<sup>th</sup> grade genre tastings.

By investing in the Kennedy library maker space, Jessica skillfully weaves engaging, hands-on experiences into learning experience for every learner in her Title I school. Jessica has used funding and grants from the NPS Foundation Donors Choose, local donations, Institute of Museum and Libraries grant funding and book fair monies to grow this space. She has added Ozobots, hands-on activity kits like loom weaving and knitting, K'Nex, art supplies, Osmo kits, and Snap Circuits. She also added a sewing machine and a Cricut for more adventurous projects like the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Freedom Quilt, the culmination of a biography study during Black History Month. Projects in the maker space included animal habitat creations, iMovie trailers, Chatterpix recordings, and other innovative options. She has worked with students to move from announcements over the public address system to student created announcement videos, filmed in front of the maker space green screen and shown in every classroom in the building every day.

Jessica's passions and ideas are well suited to the population she serves at her Title I school. This year her work to elevate literacy has been two-fold. She has thoughtfully evaluated her library collection and added materials that reflect the diversity in her students as well as books that support inclusion and equity. She has also initiated a guest reader program. This idea was borne out of the need to build a culture of literacy by bringing excitement about reading to all Kennedy learners. To date, Jessica has brought in over twenty guest readers with more scheduled to model reading for learners. Among her illustrious readers are Superintendent Dr. Migliorino, the Norman mayor, Representatives Emily Virgin, Jacob Rosecrants, and Merlyn Bell, and many more. This unique program has had several by-products. It has brought an awareness and visibility to the community about Kennedy Elementary School and its hard-working staff and given readers a look at Kennedy's amazing learners and their unique skills and needs. Jessica has been very deliberate about sharing guest readers' pictures on social media highlighting their participation and experiences.

Jessica is a site and district leader. She is a member of Kennedy's Leadership Team and the Norman Public Schools Librarian Advisory Board. Jessica is a mentor to many librarians, but served as a formal mentor to one of our new school librarians this year. She is an active member of the Oklahoma School Librarians, the Oklahoma Library Association, the American Library Association, the Oklahoma Technology Association, and the American Association of School Librarians.

Jessica has built a vibrant library program where all learners, students and staff alike, inquire, read, learn, create and flourish. Teachers trust that their rich collaborative partnership with Jessica will benefit all learners. Jessica is driven, completing her MLIS degree from Rutgers University in only two years while balancing family and her new position as a school librarian. She communicates skillfully, presents ideas clearly, use data to drive decisions and interacts easily with teachers, administrators, students and parents. I believe that Jessica's thoughtfulness, compassion, professionalism, innovative spirit, ability to share, and thirst for learning make her an authentic candidate for the Oklahoma Teacher of the Year.

Sincerely,

*Kathryn Roots Lewis*

Kathryn Roots Lewis  
Director of Libraries and Instructional Technology  
Norman Public Schools



**Nicholas J. Migliorino, PhD.**  
Superintendent  
**Norman Public Schools**  
131 South Flood Avenue  
Norman, Oklahoma 73069  
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August 18, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

As superintendent for Norman Public Schools I have the privilege to work with some of the best educators in the state of Oklahoma, and in my opinion the country. One of those exceptional individuals is our 2020 District Teacher of the Year Jessica Eschbach.

From the minute she came to Norman Public Schools as a new teacher just seven years ago, Jessica has been the model of the kind of dedication, passion and professionalism that is found in all of the very best teachers. Her excellence in the classroom has given her the credibility to become the kind of leader her peers are happy to follow, and it's a good thing, too, because Jessica is driven to impact her students and colleagues for the better. In her first years of teaching she became the chair of both departments in which she worked and also became the team lead for her grade level. She co-chaired her school's safety team and worked to revamp emergency plans to ensure safer outcomes. Because she is viewed as an example for others, she was chosen to work as a new-teacher liaison to help other new educators adapt and adjust as they began their careers.

Jessica's passion for education along with her work ethic and pursuit of excellence led her to attain a Master's Degree and to transition to a role as a teacher librarian at the elementary level. In this position she has continued to thrive, bringing innovative and impactful teaching to all the students at Kennedy Elementary. One of the things I am most proud of is Jessica's new guest reader program. She is reaching out and engaging with community leaders to bring in someone each week to read to students and tour their building. She has had state senators and representatives, business leaders and even the mayor of Norman. Forming these relationships with local thought leaders and decision makers is an incredible force for good in public education and it is particularly impactful for a school like Kennedy where so many students face economic challenges and otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to meet and talk with these leaders.

For all her leadership and accomplishment, the thing that makes Jessica the most successful as a teacher is that she has never lost sight of her "why." Everything she does is focused on serving her students. Her skill and passion is impossible to miss, as evidenced by her selection as our 2020 District Teacher of the Year. But Jessica has been exceptional from day one. In fact she was one of a handful of finalists for the same award in 2018.

Jessica is a shining light in the teaching profession and an irreplaceable asset to this district and the state of Oklahoma. Rare is the educator who combines Jessica's heart, her passion, her love of teaching and children with her insatiable drive to build, innovate and make the world around her a better place for her students. Jessica is a tribute to this noble profession and would be a superb choice for Oklahoma Teacher of the Year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nick Migliorino  
Superintendent  
Norman Public Schools

**Mission:** To prepare and inspire all students to achieve their full potential  
**Values:** Integrity | Inclusiveness | Collaboration | Optimism

It is my distinct and great honor to recommend to you Mrs. Jessica Eschbach as a nominee for Oklahoma Teacher of the year. You truly could not have a finer person to represent the community and the state. I feel her accomplishments speak for themselves, but give her a few minutes and she will quite literally change the way you think about service in public education.

Jessica is first and foremost, an advocate; whether students, staff, or community, Jessica is a leader when it comes to serving others and her intrinsic drive is to improve the lives of those around her through whatever means are available to her. She understands the broad definition of "student achievement" and all the factors that can influence that. She works hard to mitigate circumstances that may negatively influence these from not only from a collaborative place, but also from a "boots on the ground" place. During her time as the librarian at Kennedy, she served on multiple committees and in particular at Kennedy, the principal's advisory, where her input helped drive decision making. One example of not only an idea but an implementation was her work on our implementation of Virtues Education through our partnership with the Institute of Human Flourishing at OU. Her dedication to our staff was visible in the resources she procured in terms of physical and digital as well as the brainstorming/planning/encouraging support she provided. Her dedication to students was evidenced in the selection of quality materials, the planning of interesting and educational experiences, and the production of daily videos which served the purposes of leadership development for our older students, the celebration of individual student success throughout the building, and the age-appropriate instruction of our virtues in fun and creative ways.

Jessica is a leader with technology, serving as site contact to assist with testing and all things technological. As the librarian and now as our innovative learning coach, she collaborates with teachers on quality instruction that integrates technology in appropriate and meaningful ways and supports them when they want to try new things. She helps the site manage and maintain hardware and assists with data collection which help us make decisions for continuous improvement

Jessica was a phenomenal teacher librarian; and now, even working with multiple schools, going above and beyond is her 'norm'. She worked hard to procure and maintain an engaging collection, create spaces for fun and learning, and helps staff with instruction that invites students to stay curious and find answers to questions they have, and then use that knowledge in creative ways. Many of the resources we have in our building are a direct result of her grant writing, or her support of staff in their grant writing. She taught (outside of work hours) procedures for grant writing so instructional staff could be successful on their own. As a result, Kennedy is becoming a resource-rich environment, able to offer similar experiences to our underserved students as compared to their more affluent counterparts in other areas of the district.

I am proud to say I chose Jessica, but I am even more pleased and we are even more blessed that she chose us, and continues to choose us, each and every day. I feel confident saying you cannot go wrong selecting her to represent Oklahoma as their Teacher of the Year.

In Service and Most Respectfully,  
Lisa Stieg