

APPLICANT INFORMATION FORM

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Ginger Billman
Name

1st grade
Current Grade Level(s) Taught

All
Current Subject(s) Taught

3 years in 1st / 16 years at Richmond
Years in Current Position

26
Total Years of Teaching Experience

None
Languages Other than English Spoken Fluently

Areas of National Board Certification Achieved or In Progress:
None

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Stillwater Public Schools
School District

Richmond Elementary
School Name

422
School Size

6301
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	1992-1994	Master's Degree in Special Education
Oklahoma State Universtiy	1988-1992	Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Ed.

Mount Saint Mary High School	Oklahoma City	OK	73109
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
Stillwater Public Schools	First Grade & Kindergarten Teacher & Special Ed. TA	2003-present
Cushing Public Schools	Kindergarten Teacher & Special Ed. Teacher	1996-2002
Oklahoma City	Second Grade, Transitional 1st & Special Ed. Teacher	1992-1996

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

Membership	Position Held	Dates
OEA	Member	2005-2015
SEA	Member	2005-2015
OECTA	Member	2004-2007
NAEYC	Member	1996-2002
AFT	Member	1992-1996

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

Title	Position Held	Dates
Great Expectations	Instructor	2014-present
Mentor	Mentor / Excel Student Teacher	2017-2020
Mentor	Mentor / Student Teacher	1998-2012
Mentor	Mentor / First Year Teachers	multiple years
Richmond PLC	Leadership Team Representative	2017-2020
Richmond Admin. Coun.	Administrative Council Representative	2005-07,2010-13
Hawthorne Site Rep	Administrative Site Team Representative	1993-1994

AWARDS AND OTHER RECOGNITION OF TEACHING

Title	Dates
District Teacher of the Year, Stillwater Public Schools	2019-2020
Teacher of the Year, Richmond Elementary	2019-2020
Teacher of Today, Masonic Frontier Lodge 48	2019-2020
Teacher of the Year, Richmond Elementary	2007-2008
Teacher of Today, Cushing Masonic Lodge	2001-2002
Finalist, Cushing District Teacher of the Year	1999-2000
Teacher of the Year, Deep Rock Elementary (Cushing)	1999-2000
Top Ten, OSU College of Education	1991-1992
Order of Omega	1991-1992

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.

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." — William Arthur Ward

I graduated from Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. I began teaching in Oklahoma City while finishing up a Master's in Special Education from the University of Central Oklahoma. I also received my certification in Early Childhood at this time.

For 26 years I have had the privilege to teach children. I started teaching for OKC Public Schools (special education K-5, 2nd grade and Transitional 1st grade). From there, I moved to Cushing where I taught special education, and then I landed my dream grade — Kindergarten. I've taught in Stillwater for 16 years.

I taught kindergarten for 13 years and thought it was my "favorite" until I was asked to move to 1st three years ago. Now I have a new "favorite" grade. I also teach professional development around the state and even had the opportunity to teach and work alongside educators in rural Honduras.

When I think about the factors that influenced me to become a teacher, I think about several teachers and mentors I had: Judith Guilfoyle, Deborah Troilett and Dave Attaway. Each had different teaching styles and personalities, but for some reason these teachers stood out from all the others. They inspired me! Each of these teachers and mentors had one thing in common — they saw the importance of building relationships with students. They took time to get to know us and what was going on in our lives. I truly feel a connection with each of these teachers who helped me shape my own classroom style. I didn't know it at the time, but the fact that these teachers took extra time to just talk to me and care about me made such a difference.

My greatest contributions and accomplishments are three-fold: first, with my students; and second, with student teachers and mentees. Thirdly, through grants and other professional endeavors.

With my students, I feel my contributions in their education have come in small, quiet moments in the classroom. They are not grand events filled with great recognition. However, in my classroom, we celebrate these events because they are worthy of celebration! The greatest contributions I make are when I help a student discover something new, whether it's writing his or her name for the first time, learning the alphabet or how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. I remember working for months teaching a special education student to write his name, but "Alfredo" always seemed to leave out a letter or two. That Christmas, he gave me a card and said, "Sorry I couldn't buy you a gift." On the card he had written his name — perfectly. That is why I love teaching. The little things I do each day make a BIG difference. The simplest things can often mean the most. Once a child realizes that he or she can master a task and achieve a goal, then they are hungry for more. Their minds are like sponges soaking up all the knowledge they can get their tiny hands on, and when that love of learning begins, I have made a very significant contribution.

With student teachers and mentees, I feel my contributions are more noticeable outside the classroom. One of my strengths is classroom management, and I love to help other teachers become excellent at managing their classroom. When they figure out some key techniques to use, the difference in the learning environment is apparent to others that aren't even a part of the class. The young teachers and teachers-to-be gain confidence and control and are able to focus on teaching. The students enjoy and feel comfortable in class, and the atmosphere is much more conducive to learning. Sharing this knowledge with others impacts endless amounts of students.

I have been able to supplement resources available in my classroom and building with grants through the Stillwater Public Education Foundation and other state/local organizations to enhance the learning experience for many students.

People don't become teachers for the recognition, but I am proud to say I was recognized as a finalist for District Teacher of the Year in Cushing in 1999 and Richmond's TOY in 2008. To be named Richmond's selection this year, and Stillwater's District Teacher of the Year is an honor, as I look at my outstanding and deserving colleagues.

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?

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

— Teddy Roosevelt

My philosophy in education is that you need to build a culture of respect and set high expectations, which together will achieve academic excellence. I want to move each child forward, striving for his or her personal best, regardless of what labels have been placed upon them by others. Each child possesses unique gifts and has something to offer in our classroom. It took time to realize that relationships and mutual respect make the difference.

I not only want to find out how each student learns best, but I want to know what is going on in their lives. When you build this type of relationship, students have a greater desire to learn and are inspired to do their personal best. Every day I greet each student before they enter the classroom. I want them to know I care and that we are going to work hard to have a great day. I start class with a morning meeting and share time. Morning meetings consist of different greetings and cooperative games. This time allows me to see who is an introvert, extrovert, leader, encourager, competitive, compassionate ... Share time offers a small glimpse into their world. I try and build conversations later with what I learned from their share time.

I also take an interest in their outside activities such as sports, gymnastics, dance, etc. Knowing what a child is interested in is important when building a relationship. The best part of building these relationships is that they last for years. These aren't just my kids for the year I have them — they are always my kids. I love seeing them years later and hearing about what career path they are taking or what they are studying to become.

My beliefs are demonstrated in my personal teaching style each day. To build respect in my classroom, you will see the following: Children taking responsibility for their things; student greeters when someone visits the room; character traits being taught and discussed throughout the year through literature, skits and most importantly, discipline situations. I believe in logical and natural consequences for behavior. Discipline comes from the word "disciple" which means "to train a child." Natural consequences help teach a lesson. Punishment is often not a logical consequence and doesn't usually teach a lesson.

One can not achieve academic excellence without building a culture that helps children feel comfortable, safe and loved. In my classroom, this looks like students setting goals for themselves, and me challenging them to do their very best; vocabulary and "word walls" that increase knowledge, spelling and gives them resources to be in charge of their learning; and children excited about learning and not afraid to share or try new things.

An outstanding teacher (regardless of the grade level) is someone who can create a culture of respect and an environment conducive to academic achievement that enables and inspires children to want to learn. An outstanding teacher has a passion to learn and try new techniques and strategies that will help them be the best teacher they can be. He or she also builds relationships with students and teaches them that mistakes are OK and are a building block for learning. An outstanding teacher teaches moral character as well as academic standards and is always engaged and focused on students and what is going on in the classroom.

The rewards I find in teaching are seeing a child's excitement when the door to discovery is unlocked. I go through this door with the children, walking them step-by-step. We're going through the learning process together, and I often find that I get just as much out of it as the child, if not more. Education isn't a destination, a goal to be achieved once you've achieved several degrees of academia. Education is a journey, and it begins when you're born and doesn't end until you take your last breath, and I've found the journey is so much better when you share it with others.

EDUCATION ISSUES AND TRENDS

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

"We remember the people that show up in our darkest hours." — Shauna L. Hoey

Major public education issues today would include teacher retention/pay, class size, technology, childhood trauma, lack of support, and budget cuts. All of these issues are pressing, but childhood trauma is one that I feel strongly about.

The National Institute of Mental Health (USA) defines childhood trauma as: "The experience of an event by a child that is emotionally painful or distressful, which often results in lasting mental and physical effects." Causes of childhood trauma can be from physical, sexual, or verbal abuse, as well as violence or neglect in a relationship. Trauma can also result from accidents, natural disasters, loss or illness of a parent, etc.

The effects of childhood trauma are substantial and can impair the child's daily functioning — physically, socially, and emotionally. Trauma looks different for every child. Children may experience anxiety, fear, guilt, or have trouble concentrating and/or sleeping ... These are just a few of the symptoms children could be dealing with.

With astonishing statistics stating that one-half to two-thirds of children experience some kind of trauma, we must find ways to support ALL of them. We, as educators, may not even know who some of these children are. Can we fix all of their problems? Probably not, but we can help. I think having and continuing to build a school culture that is based on respect provides a safe, stable place for these children. However, we all know that some children who have experienced severe childhood trauma are difficult to reach even if they are provided a safe environment. This is where teachers need support. Most teachers do their best to build relationships and make positive interactions with each student daily, but it is difficult to give a child who has experienced trauma much quality time when you have 20-plus students in the classroom. This is one major reason these children begin or continue to experience academic decline and behavior issues.

Most likely these children are seeing a counselor, but we can still do more. These students need to feel safe among other adults besides just their teacher. If we were able to give these students more time and more people who truly care about their well-being, it would certainly help with trust issues and help them to feel secure and possibly expedite their healing process. We need to make a difference in these children's lives every day. I call this idea the "Daily Difference." This idea grew from seeds that were planted during a professional development training.

I suggest that all school staff (not just classroom teachers, but also those who are not hands-on with children: principal, assistant principal, office staff, cafeteria manager, custodians, etc.) commit to being Daily Difference makers, by intentional interactions with two or three children dealing with trauma each day. It could be as easy as saying, "Good morning" and asking them a few questions or giving positive encouragement to the same children each day. This would provide consistent, positive daily contact.

The goal is that these children would develop a healthy relationship with an adult other than their teacher. This reiterates my philosophy that building relationships with students is the most important thing we can do as educators. If we can provide positive, safe relationships for these children so they can begin to trust again, we will be making a positive impact one child at a time.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has, and will continue to have, an impact on all children, but especially students dealing with childhood trauma. This traumatic experience can reveal pre-existing conditions in children already experiencing trauma.

Students could be dealing with parents who have lost jobs or family and friends that are battling COVID-19. Children are also experiencing trauma due to the loss of social interaction with friends or adults that they trust, such as teachers and counselors.

It is important for teachers and counselors to maintain virtual contact through platforms like Zoom or Google Meet. This will be a connection that will allow the relationship to continue to be built. This is a great time to teach coping skills and compassion for others. Children need to feel safe and connected, especially during this time of social distancing. Continuing to build relationships is just as relevant as academics during this pandemic.

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?

"Passionate teachers don't just inspire their students... they inspire their colleagues. They have the potential to impact the culture of the entire school." — Danny Steele

To strengthen and improve the teaching profession, I feel it is important to foster growth in my own career. An excellent way to progress in my field is by continuing my professional training through workshops and conferences. Unless I grow as an educator, how can I expect to impact my profession? Continued learning is important because it helps me to stay focused and up-to-date on the latest teaching techniques and methods.

I have realized that the impact of my knowledge can multiply if I share it with others. I went to Great Expectations training for the first time in 1998. GE is a program that I value and has helped me develop into the educator I am today. Six years ago, I decided to work hard and apply to be a Great Expectations Instructor. This is something I have always aspired to be, but I didn't think I was qualified to teach other teachers. I took the challenge of getting out of my comfort zone and accomplishing a big goal for myself. Being a GE instructor has helped me stay abreast of current educational issues and best practices. I am proud to say I have taught many educators from Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and even Michigan during Great Expectations Summer Institutes over the last six summers. I've also traveled to Honduras twice to teach and work with educators in a similar program.

I enjoy sharing my resources, advice and love of teaching with these educators. I also enjoy learning from them. These educators have varying experience levels. Some are about to start their first year and some have taught many more years than myself. I learn from all of them, and just like children in my classroom, all of these teachers have something to offer. Some are burnt out on teaching, and I can help inspire them to have a new start and try some new techniques to make their remaining years more successful.

Amongst my colleagues at Richmond, I strive to be a leader and a team player. I am always willing to share ideas and techniques that have worked. I really enjoy working on a team. My team helps me to be my best each day. We inspire each other to try new activities in our classrooms. I am so thankful to work with other amazing educators.

Accountability in the teaching profession is hard. Comparing data from one class to the next is not effective. A step toward creating accountability should be comparing "Student A" outcomes with "Student A." Teachers need to see if a child has made progress during the year and not compare them with student results from a previous year. By comparing a students' own benchmarks, we know we have been successful when we find that a child has shown academic growth. This data is a valuable piece of information in what we need to teach and how we teach. We can look at the data and know if we need to reteach the skill or if the child is ready to move on to a new skill.

I also think accountability can lie within our own teaching and what we do to make it better. One of the most rewarding and growth-building practices I have done is watching myself teach a lesson. I was able to look back at the lesson and see what management techniques worked or didn't work, what teaching strategies the children were most engaged in, who was on task and who was not. I could make notes about who I needed to call on more often because they weren't as engaged as I wanted them to be. If teachers would video and reflect on their own teaching it would be so beneficial. If the teacher were actually given time to reflect on what they are good at and what they could improve upon, I think everyone — students and teachers — would benefit. This video process could play an important part in teacher goals written each year. It could even be taken a step further, and teachers could volunteer to post their lessons or allow peers to come in for observations so we could learn from each other. Being willing to share ideas and teaching successes is an asset of a great teacher.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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

"Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much." — Helen Keller

I am committed to community involvement through a number of activities, and I have a heart for individuals living with special needs. For the past two years, I have helped with the Tim Tebow Foundation's Night to Shine, a worldwide special needs prom. Last year I served on the "Parent Prom" committee by decorating and gathering donations from local businesses to sponsor door prizes for each parent who attended. This year, I served at Night to Shine by recruiting buddies and volunteers to serve the night of the prom. I was the committee chair for the Red Carpet Fans.

Through my local church, I serve on a ministry team that travels to Down Home Ranch in Elgin, Texas, every spring break. This is a unique community where adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities live and work. My husband and I teach an art/painting class, as well as help with clean-up projects, renovations, maintenance, and most importantly, build relationships with the Ranchers. I also serve on the Sunnybrook Christian Church Kids Team. I assist with a precious girl who is living with Down Syndrome and other students who might need assistance. I have also been a sponsor at YouthQuake, a Colorado trip with 300-plus teenagers for several years.

My family served regularly at Love Feast (a free weekly community meal) for seven years until the program ended in November, 2019. We miss our time serving there, helping those struggling with hunger and food insecurity in Stillwater.

As an educator and parent, I feel it's imperative to stay up to date with educational issues facing our state and community. I took part every day in the Oklahoma teacher walkout in 2018 to help display a united front and send a strong message to our elected officials about the importance of public education. My teenage daughters also took part, as I feel it's important to set an example for the next generation of teachers and leaders.

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?

"Children learn more from what you are than what you teach." — W.E.B. DuBois

As a spokesperson for educators, my message would include two components. First, as educators, we must take care of ourselves mentally, physically and emotionally. Teachers will naturally put others before ourselves. It is important for us to emotionally "turn our brain off" from teaching for quality periods of time on evenings and weekends and recharge, whether that is exercising, reading, or just watching TV. Find a balance by choosing an evening to work late and choosing days that you will leave and know the work can wait until tomorrow. Our bodies and brains need a break so we can be at our best in the classroom. If we are mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted, we are not giving our all to students. We need to ask ourselves each morning, "Do I need to adjust my attitude? Have I put negative 'baggage' behind me? Am I letting things I cannot control, control me?" We need to be ready to take on the day.

Next, I would encourage teachers to build each other up. We know firsthand how stressful and difficult the teaching profession can be. Encourage your peers. Write a note of congratulations about something they accomplished. We all make sacrifices as teachers, and we need to hear "thank you" and "I appreciate you." Be intentional about spreading encouragement. Help out colleagues whenever you can. Your school and the entire district should be working as a team. Share ideas and have the mentality that together we can make our profession great across Oklahoma. If you taught an amazing lesson and your children were engaged and successful in learning the goal, share it with a teammate! We are in this profession for all children, not just those in our own classroom.

I would also ask the public to build teachers up, through encouragement, supporting public education at the polls, and volunteering in their local schools so they can see firsthand what we are accomplishing. These children are our future and need the support of their teachers and 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?

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." — Maya Angelou

As I stated previously in my philosophy of teaching, I think building relationships is the foundation children need before they can learn and be successful in their classroom. A lesson that defines me as a teacher is one that I have used for many years. I have tweaked it every now and then, but I feel like it is a vital lesson for every child. I start by introducing the book *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes. The story is about a girl named Chrysanthemum who is excited to start school until she gets there and children make fun of her name. I engage each student by giving everyone a small paper heart (I have a large paper heart). I build upon their prior knowledge by asking how they felt on the first day of school. We discuss the emotions of excited, happy, nervous, scared, etc. ...

As I read the story, the children crumple their paper heart each time they hear words that are unkind, hurtful or that would "break your heart." If they hear things that are kind or "make their heart happy" they try and smooth out the paper. The children soon see that the unkind words are hurting Chrysanthemum's heart, and no matter how many kind things you say to her, you can never fix her heart — there will always be scars. I tie this into the famous quote by Maya Angelou: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

The children take their paper hearts home as a reminder, and we hang the big heart in our room with the words: "Before you speak, think and be smart. It's hard to fix a wrinkled heart." I refer back to that heart whenever we have a problem with someone saying hurtful things. I know the children are influenced by this lesson because when friends aren't being kind, I will hear them reminding each other to be nice because we can't "unwrinkle" someone's heart. This lesson incorporates my beliefs about building relationships with students so they can feel safe and comfortable in their environment. This social, emotional learning is necessary before academic learning can happen.



July 20, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing this letter on behalf of Mrs. Ginger Billman, our Site and Stillwater District Teacher of the Year. I have worked with Mrs. Billman for 7 years in my position as Principal of Richmond Elementary School. Mrs. Billman is a teacher-leader at Richmond Elementary. She continually works to build a collaborative culture, mentoring not only our new teachers but pre-service teachers as well. Richmond has been a Great Expectations model school for 17 years and Mrs. Billman has played a significant role in maintaining this status. She is a Great Expectations instructor and brings her experience and expertise to her classroom and our school daily. She is an invaluable resource to our teachers, always willing to share ideas or give input on lessons and planning. She is the very definition of a team player.

Although she is incredible when it comes to serving our school, her real talents shine in her one-on-one interactions. Mrs. Billman is a pure student builder. She builds their confidence; she builds their knowledge; she builds their character. She is a master at edifying our kids personally and academically. She pledges to actively pursue excellence for her students and herself. She believes in each child. She grows them and they flourish under her care. My son Graham was fortunate to be one of Mrs. Billman's first graders this year. During April Fools, a joke was circulating, stating that because of COVID19, all students would be retained next school year. I happened to read the headline out loud to my husband and Graham overheard and was thrilled at the idea of having Mrs. Billman again. He was more than willing to repeat 1st grade if it meant more time with his beloved teacher. That speaks volumes to how special a teacher Mrs. Billman is to her students. She is purposeful in building relationships with her kids and their families. She has touched the lives of so many students and she's a teacher they will always cherish.

It is my great honor to recommend Mrs. Ginger Billman for Oklahoma State Teacher of the Year.

Sincerely,

Kendra Rider
Principal
Richmond Elementary

RICHMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Great Expectations Foundation
707 N. Grand Avenue # 108
Tahlequah, OK 74464

Transforming Lives Through Education

June 22, 2020

Oklahoma State Department of Education
Oklahoma Teacher of the Year Selection Committee
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

To the Oklahoma Teacher of the Year Selection Committee:

This letter of recommendation is for Ginger Billman, an outstanding first-grade teacher for Richmond Elementary, Stillwater. As the Richmond Elementary Great Expectations Instructional Coach for seventeen years, I have observed Ginger's passion for her students' continuous social and academic well-being, as well as her involvement in professional growth training. Ginger has made significant contributions as a model presenter and team player during instructor training and the Great Expectations Summer Institutes.

Ginger's students experience kindheartedness as she consistently shares greetings, words of encouragement, and positive dialogue from the beginning of the day to its end. Individual student work, as well as meaningful academic peripherals, fill the cheerfully decorated first-grade classroom. A high level of trust is evident as students offer ideas and express themselves confidently, fluently, and skillfully in an enriched, caring, and nurturing environment.

Ginger's classroom arrangement provides a comfortable setting for students to enjoy low stress yet high challenge activities and engaging structures that address and meet students' needs. Students meet in a whole group setting for character building, for sharing personal or academic contributions, and for building community. Students begin their day assessing assignments, completing individual responsibilities, and honoring expectations for the class as they work in centers, in whole group settings, and individually.

Through Ginger's community and parent commitment, her students gain career information, learning more about varied vocational opportunities and requirements. Volunteers also spend time reading to students and offer art and STEAM projects. First-grade parents recognize Ginger's after-hours support as she attends her students' performances and sports functions.

The Richmond Elementary team relies on Ginger's leadership abilities in a variety of ways. She currently serves on Richmond's Great Expectations Leadership Team, Professional Learning Committee Leadership Team, and has mentored several student teachers. Her leadership qualities include listening, sharing motivational strategies, and positive outcomes. One of Ginger's most exceptional qualities is that she generously provides the time and effort required to make a situation or task even better.

Ginger Billman is an excellent candidate for the Oklahoma Teacher of the Year.

Sincerely,

Betty Flurry, Great Expectations Instructional Coach



June 8, 2020

Dear Selection Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Ginger Billman, Stillwater Public Schools' Teacher of the Year 2019-2020.

In 2003 as the Principal of Richmond Elementary I had the privilege of hiring Ginger as a Kindergarten Teacher. By far she is one of the very best educators I hired in my thirty-nine years in education. Ginger came to us with teaching experience in Special Education and Early Childhood Education. We were excited for her to join our team as our special education population was expanding along with our inclusive practices.

Ginger brought more than just her teaching experience to Richmond. She is a true professional educator, a teacher leader with insight to building relationships and knowing how children learn. When Ginger first started at Richmond the staff was just beginning training and implementation of Great Expectations. This required personal commitment of time and changes in teaching practices. Ginger demonstrated she was a teacher leader by her actions and attitude towards change. Ginger has now taught for Great Expectations for many years and is a key factor in the success of the positive culture of respect and learning at Richmond.

Ginger's knowledge of her individual students is one of her greatest assets. When watching Ginger work with her students you see the importance of the teacher-student relationship. She knows exactly what each student needs to learn and how they learn best. Ginger prioritizes communication with parents because she knows the importance of working together for students to be successful.

Ginger's commitment to the field of education makes a tremendous impact on the profession. She is a mentor for student teachers and new teachers just starting their careers. She leads professional development training as well as serving on the Professional Learning Community Leadership Team.

I highly recommend Ginger Billman to serve as the State of Oklahoma Teacher of the Year. Ginger is an asset to Richmond Elementary and Stillwater Public Schools and will be a great asset representing the best educators in the state of Oklahoma.

Sincerely,



Gay Washington, Ed.D.

Executive Director