

2020 ACPS Teacher of the Year

Ashley Sandoval

Physical Education Teacher
Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology

2020 ACPS Teacher of the Year Nominees

Latasha Sturgis

Special Education Teacher
Early Childhood Center

Chandra Smouse

Math Coach
Patrick Henry K-8 School

Stephenie Waters

Fifth Grade Teacher
Charles Barrett Elementary School

Donna Anthony

Kindergarten Teacher
Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School

Jessica Angelo

First Grade Teacher
Douglas MacArthur Elementary School

Felecia Stinson

Third Grade Teacher
Williams Ramsay Elementary School

Judy Fulghum

K-12 Reading Specialist
George Mason Elementary School

Rosina Simmons

Reading Specialist
Francis C. Hammond Middle School

Farr Quinn

Algebra and Geometry Teacher
Jefferson-Houston PreK-8 IB School

Mary Breslin

Life Science Teacher
George Washington Middle School

Erin Turner

K-2 Autism Support Teacher
John Adams Elementary School

Ashley Coleman

EL/Math Teacher
T.C. Williams High School
King Street Campus

Katherine White

First Grade Teacher
Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy

LaGina Gross

Library Media Specialist
T.C. Williams High School
Minnie Howard Campus

Nicole Kertyzak

Special Education Teacher
Matthew Maury Elementary School

Qiana Griles-Gibbons

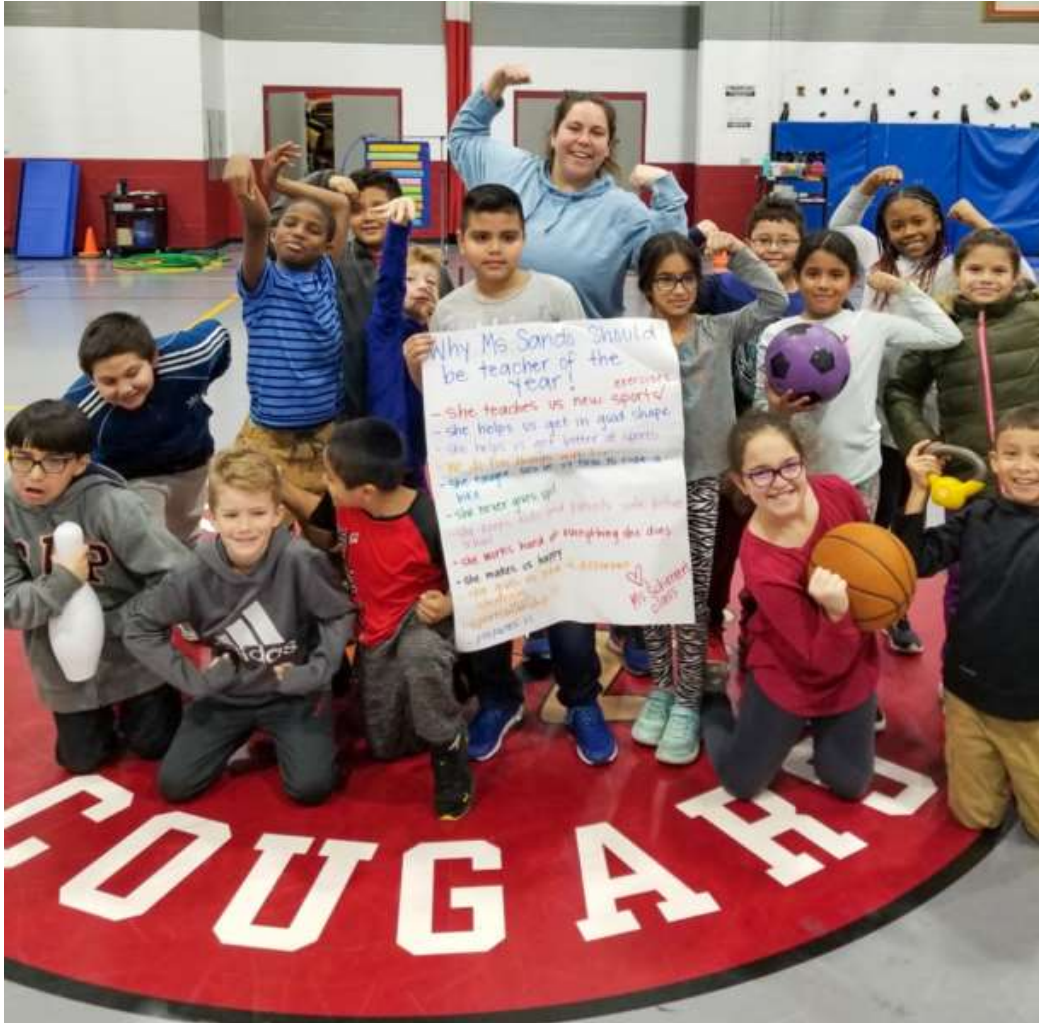
Science Teacher
T.C. Williams High School
Satellite Campus

Melanie Needels

Second Grade Teacher
Mount Vernon Community School

2019-2020 ACPS Teacher of the Year

Ashley Sandoval – Physical Education Teacher
Cora Kelly School for Science, Math and Technology



Ashley Sandoval

“Teaching to me means creating the opportunity for students to grow their knowledge and skills to overcome any obstacles they may face in the future. As a health and physical education teacher, my teaching focuses on life, social and physical skills needed for a student to be a valuable, safe, and healthy citizen in a community. I want my students to know and understand that they can achieve greatness in any dream or passion they may have through life.”

2019-2020 Teacher of the Year Nominees

Latasha Sturgis – Special Education Teacher
Early Childhood Center



Latasha Sturgis

“I knew at an early age that I wanted to be a teacher. It was confirmed later that my calling was to be a special educator. The day I witnessed one of my non-verbal students use his first words brought me to tears. I knew then, I needed him, just as much as he needed me. My role as a teacher means connecting my students to rich experiences with the support of their families that will impact how they view the world. Teaching is working with families, collaborating with other educators and creating experiences for diverse learners that last a lifetime.”

Stephenie Waters – Fifth Grade Teacher
Charles Barrett Elementary School



Stephenie Waters

“To me teaching is creating a warm, safe environment where kids can learn about the world around them. It is not only imparting knowledge, but also providing opportunities for students to learn through experience, both theirs and mine. Teaching is making sure the kids know it’s safe to be who they are. It is also preparing them for times they will be tested: both in the traditional sense of academic testing, and tests of character and resilience. For me, teaching is a career of learning, where each and every day I learn something, whether sought after pedagogical knowledge or experiential learning.”

Jessica Angelo – First Grade Teacher
Douglas MacArthur Elementary School



Jessica Angelo

“Being a teacher means instilling a love of learning and reading into each of my students so that they become lifelong learners, readers, and leaders. It means providing a safe place for my students to learn and thrive. It means showing them it’s okay to make mistakes and how when we persist through those mistakes it helps to make us stronger and smarter. Being a teacher means showing each of my students their potential for learning and success and most importantly that learning can be fun.”

Judy Fulghum – English Learners (EL) Teacher
George Mason Elementary School



Judy Fulghum

“To me, teaching means witnessing significant events in the lives of young children. I’ve watched determined children learn to read after years of struggling, imaginative children find their voices through writing, and lonely children make friends for the first time. I’ve watched quiet children gain the confidence to speak to a group, curious children propel others to learn something new, and captivated children listen to every word of a great story. These collective moments of joy are what teaching means to me.”

Farr Prickett – Algebra and Geometry Teacher Jefferson-Houston PreK-8 IB School



Ashley Farr Prickett Quinn

“I love lists. So here is the list of what teaching means to me (it’s always growing).

Teaching is...

- Providing opportunity for students to explore and inquire
- Making mistakes and trying again — both me and the students
- Exploring math concepts through investigation and discovery
- Finding everyone’s strength, especially when they don’t think they have one
- Giving students the power, the voice, and the tools they need to be agents of change
- Affirming identities and bringing culture to the math classroom
- Making math come alive through Desmos
- Learning the history of mathematics along with the concepts
- All about relationships”

Erin Turner – K-2 Autism Support Teacher
John Adams Elementary School



Erin Turner

“To me, teaching is building a bond with each student so, when they walk into my classroom they feel safe and know they are loved. It means having high expectations for all students regardless of their age or ability level. It is being the advocate for students who may not be able to advocate for themselves. It is teaching students to be inclusive and kind to each other. It is collaborating with colleagues and families so the students reach their fullest potential. To me teaching is cultivating the skills students need to be successful far beyond the classroom.

Katherine White – First Grade Teacher
Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy



Katherine White

“Teaching gives me the opportunity to instill a love of learning in each individual that walks into my classroom. I am inspired daily by my students’ infectious enthusiasm for learning, life, and friends. Above all I’m challenged by the distinct needs of these learners, but constantly rewarded by the gigantic toothless smiles that accompany my first graders’ well-earned accomplishments.”

Nicole Kertyzak – Special Education Teacher
Matthew Maury Elementary School,



Nicole Kertyzak

“To me, teaching is all about helping students reach their fullest potential, developing the whole child, and inspiring life-long learners. I believe in focusing, not only on student’s academic growth and successes, but also on behavior and social-emotional skills. I want students to be excited in their learning and view school as a safe place to learn, grow, and pursue their dreams. Teaching to me means making a difference for kids.”

Melanie Needels – Second Grade Teacher
Mount Vernon Community School



Melanie Needels

“Being a teacher has been my dream since I was a kid playing school in my basement. Now I’m living the dream. I get to go to work and make learning fun. I get to read stories, talk about history, watch kids understand something new, listen to (and try to answer) interesting questions, dress up in costumes and sing songs and most importantly make a difference to the lives of kids. I’m reminded of the impact I have had on them when Mount Vernon alumni come back and share memories of their learning experiences from my class.”

Chandra Smouse – Math Coach
Patrick Henry K-8 School,



Chandra Smouse

“For me, teaching means to make a difference by finding ways to assist, encourage, and inspire all teachers and students to succeed. It means to build confidence by making learning attainable and to push their growth by making sure they all are being challenged. Teaching is creating smiles and excitement by making school engaging and meaningful. It is having a student tell me that the math challenge this week was too easy and the next one should be harder or asking when the next challenge is available. It is helping form a life-long learner.”

Donna Anthony - Kindergarten Teacher
Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School



Donna Anthony

“Teaching has been a passion of mine for many years. I am always curious to implement new trends or theories that will enhance the knowledge of my learners. I learn so much from my students and it moves me to make sure they have a great learning experience that will inspire them to become lifelong learners.”

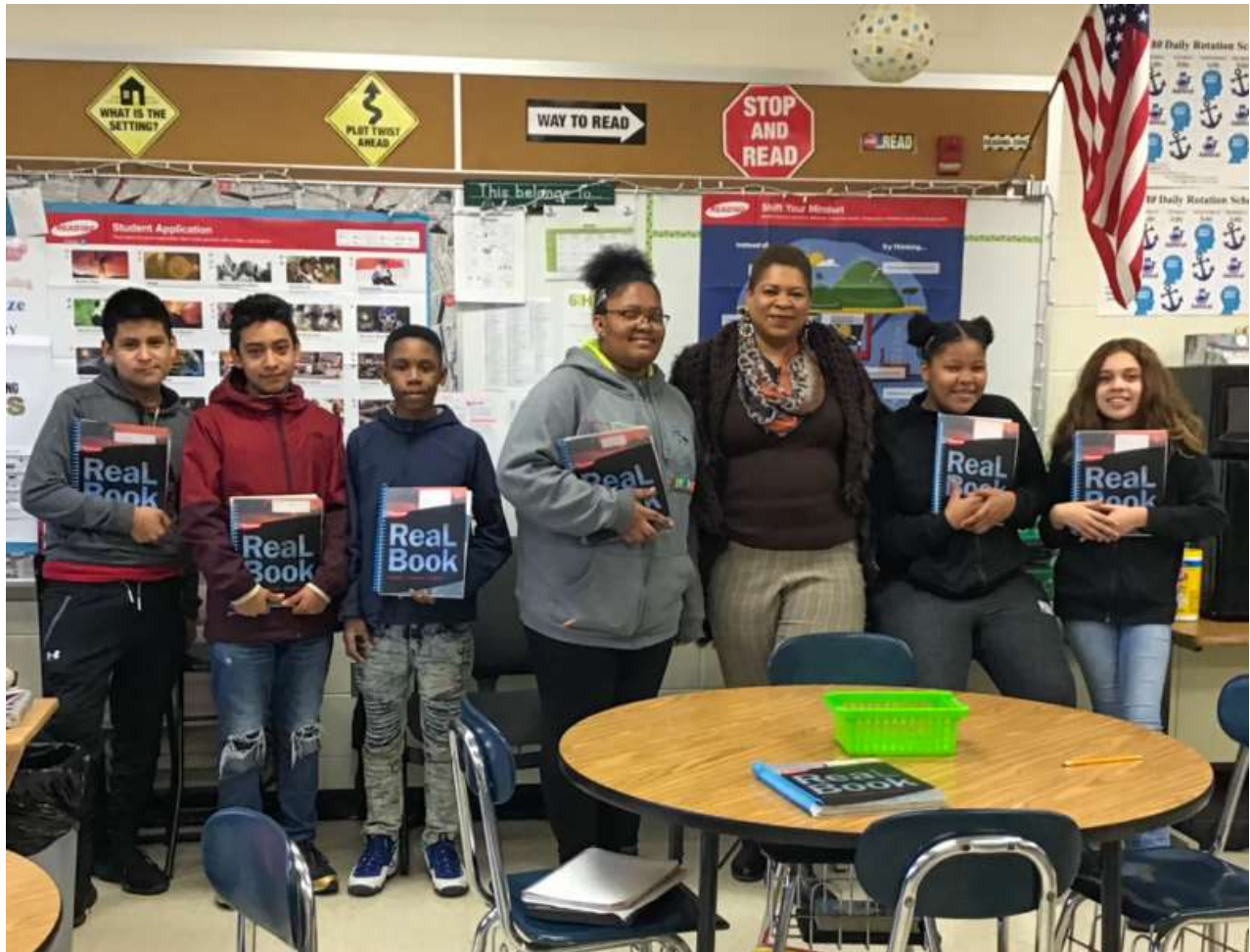
Felecia Stinson – Third Grade Teacher
William Ramsay Elementary School



Felecia Stinson

“For me, being a teacher encompasses many challenges and rewards. Teaching gives me great fulfillment knowing that I am a vessel impacting our youth in becoming leaders of the future. I feel the art of teaching should be about building relationships that will have an everlasting influence on students’ lives; knowing that they can achieve anything with hard work and a belief in themselves. Teaching for me means I have the opportunity to empower my students with the gifts of dedication, compassion, and commitment which helps them to grow as they learn.”

Rosina Simmons – Reading Specialist Francis C. Hammond Middle School



Rosina Simmons

“Teaching youngsters requires passion, compassion, patience and vision. It is the Art and Science of learning by definition. Teachers must understand what is being taught and how to impart this knowledge. The Art of teaching is presenting it creatively to engage the interest of students. As a teacher, I must see the gifts my students possess that they have yet to realize. It’s called potential! Teaching is the ability to craft those skills or gifts so that it serves you and the community. Teaching is service to all mankind. Daily, we pour into the souls of our students life-long lessons, skill-based lessons, workforce lessons and citizenship. We teach our students to R-E-S-P-E-C-T, as the Queen of Soul Aretha Franklin sang. I recently shared this lesson with my students. Respect was a vocabulary word in Read 180 class. The lyrics by the Staples Singers ring true today, ‘Respect Yourself, If you don’t respect yourself ain’t nobody gonna give a good cahoot!’ Of course, the kids laughed when I sang the lyrics out loud.”

Mary Breslin – Life Science Teacher
George Washington Middle School



Mary Breslin

“To me, teaching means supporting students in understanding how to improve the health and sustainability of their community. Sparking curiosity, fostering teamwork and guiding students to support theories through scientific writing gives our students this ability. My two greatest passions as a teacher are empowering kids to use their youth voice on issues that matter to them and building relationships with students that need them most. Teaching is loving your community!”

Ashley Coleman – EL/Math Teacher
T.C. Williams High School International Academy



Ashley Coleman

“Teaching to me means accepting that all of my students are on their own individual paths towards Algebra mastery. Along the way, it is my job to teach them not just content but also how to thrive and be productive participants in this community. If they walk away as better people, then I feel I’ve done my part.”

LaGina Gross – Library Media Specialist
T.C. Williams High School Minnie Howard Campus



LaGina Gross

“As a school librarian, teaching means making the school library an inviting classroom that enables curiosity and engages new knowledge. Teaching means providing a welcoming environment for students to think, create, explore and engage. Teaching means that I will maintain a collection that is diverse and accessible to ALL students in digital, audible and print formats. Most importantly, teaching means that I am passionate about my work to create successful citizens and lifelong readers.”

Qiana Griles-Gibbons – Science Teacher
T.C. Williams High School Satellite Campus



Qiana Griles-Gibbons

“Teaching is my passion and through it I am able to make a significant difference in the trajectory of students’ lives. At Satellite, I am privileged to support and motivate students in a way that honors their uniqueness as learners and encourages their personal best. I love to inspire students learning about the wonders of the natural world, provoke ideas and unlock their potential. I deeply value relationships with students and their families. It’s heart-warming to witness students overcome obstacles, experience success and build confidence. Ultimately, teaching is about celebrating and embracing all students – their individuality, voice, diversity, and gifts.”