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USD 305 Horizon Teachers Recognized by the Board of Education

Salina Public Schools presents a Horizon Award to teachers who have demonstrated excellence during their first full year of teaching.

2021 Secondary Horizon Award – Marysa McCartney, Central High School

Marysa is now a second year business teacher at Central High School. She left a career as a corporate accountant, in the private sector, to become a classroom teacher. She understands what it take to be successful in business. To the benefit of her students, she converts that to her classroom.

Marysa sees her students as customers and teaching is the service she offers. She constantly seeks ways to improve lessons to engage her students better, asking students for feedback about what is working or not working so well.

She is dedicated to the Central High School community, evidenced in her coaching both volleyball and basketball. Her work ethic is a powerful influence for her students while modeling the many skills necessary to balance work, community involvement and a home life.

In her classroom you will find project- and discovery-based learning and she is always looking for ways to connect curriculum to interesting, useful projects. Her students know that they matter and are cared for, every day. "At the heart of my teaching will always be building a stronger relationship with students," explains Marysa.

Marysa looks for opportunity in every challenge. During the COVID-19 experience, Marysa lists gains such as "we have improved the effectiveness of our teaching through technology; I was able to connect more, one-on-one, with students; I learned more about Google Meets and other applications; my students learned to communicate, professionally, over the internet; my students realized the privilege of being in the classroom."

Kelly Heizman, assistant principal at Central High, added, "Marysa is a teacher who makes me proud of the education profession."

2021 Elementary Horizon Award – Larrah Bills, Heusner Elementary

Larrah is in her second year as 2nd grade teacher at Heusner Elementary School. Her expectations are high for both her students and herself and she models how to achieve these expectations. For instance, her passion about the importance of community inspires her to get to know each student in Heusner Elementary. Moreover, she works hard to address them all by name.

No minute is wasted in Larrah's classroom. While working with one student on a math concept she can seamlessly give directions to other students. Her students experience love, support and accountability and learn they can accomplish anything through hard work. She teaches her students empowering mantras that come from a growth mindset. Her classroom becomes a close-knit community of learners who support each other as they grow.

Larrah explains, "It is incredibly important to me to help my students grow as individuals, emotionally, socially, and academically, while helping them realize their potential. My students constantly hear me call them "world changers" and hear the phrase, "You make our world a better place."

In Larrah's class there are ample opportunities to work on disagreeing respectfully, problem solving, working through challenges that feel overwhelming and celebrating everyone's successes, no matter the size of the success.



Lori Munsell, principal at Heusner, explains, "Larraha has found a way to meet students' needs at the most foundational level. Larraha is each student's champion, their cheerleader, their advocate, their voice. Larraha is one of those special teachers who makes a huge impact on students and staff."

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