



## MEDIA RELEASE

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## USD 305 Horizon Teachers Recognized by the Board of Education

### 2020 Elementary Horizon Teacher – Kelsey Plummer, Cottonwood Elementary School



Kelsey is into her second year as kindergarten teacher at Cottonwood Elementary School where she serves on the building leadership team and as English Language Arts representative for her teacher team.

Kelsey became a teacher to empower students to reach their potential and knowing the responsibility that accompanies a profession where lives are impacted every day. Her devotion to her craft shines through in all she does for her students.

Kindergarten students come to school with preschool experience ranging from none to two years. Kelsey strategically incorporates a gradual release of responsibility into her classroom that allows her students to develop confidence as well as independence in their learning.

Students enjoy cooperative learning strategies such as “Think-Pair-Share” or “Turn and Talk” as they learn to work together. Her communication savvy influences all her relationships, from students to parents and colleagues.

Kelsey spends countless hours finding ways to build relationships with her students and their families so she can make a difference in their lives. She knows parents and guardians are active participants in their child’s education, building warm and effective relationships through visits, phone calls, emails, and notes home.

Kyle Griffiths, Cottonwood principal, stated, “When you walk into her room it is evident that her students love her and she loves them. Last year, a parent stated how much their child loves Kelsey and that she is the kindest teacher he has ever met.”

### 2020 Secondary Horizon Teacher - Kristen Hanks, South High School

Kristen is in her second year as algebra teacher at South High School where her classroom is known as an inclusive place for students to feel respected and welcomed. In a way that is all her own, Kristen makes learning meaningful and makes connections with each of her students. She promotes risk-taking when students learn challenging concepts and builds a safe place that supports the vulnerability when classmates share findings.

Charlie Todd, fellow math teacher at South High School and 2020 USD 305 Teacher of the Year, explains, “Every part of Kristen’s classroom walls has something on it to support student learning, whether it has to do with growth mindset messaging or with new vocabulary that students are learning.”





South High School uses circles to build students' social-emotional skills during the advisory period. Kristen uses the concept in math class to build community and teach mathematical concepts. When learning direct and inverse variation, her students share and explain an example of each without repeating anything already said. Not only do students learn about the two concepts, they practice active listening and strengthen their creativity.

Dr. Curtis Stevens, South High School principal, concluded, "On numerous occasions parents have called me and praised Miss Hanks for her patience and willingness to put forth extra effort to support their struggling student. She is a distinguished teacher because of her remarkable skills to communicate, educate and collaborate so her students find academic success."

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