

Jenny Kaste

Mesquite Elementary School

2016 Rodel Exemplary Teacher Finalist

Engaging students

“ I use many engagement strategies--offering choice, getting kids talking and moving, always having a job for students, using brain breaks and structured conversations--but I believe the most important engagement strategy is planning interesting and rigorous tasks that are meaningful and relevant to their lives. If the lesson you are presenting is a challenging problem that students want to solve, the engagement is going to be self-motivated and students will listen to your content because they need and want the information you have.

Bragging rights

“ I am most proud of my students when they are selflessly kind to each other. It can be when they are working with partners and genuinely care as much about their partner's understanding as their own learning, or when they stop to help someone who has dropped all their stuff. I was recently very proud when I told my fifth-grade students we would be spending our fall party helping the first graders with a craft and got only excited responses. When students show integrity and do what is right without reward I am filled with pride.

Making data-driven decisions

“ I understand that quantitative data is a snapshot of a single point on a yearlong journey towards mastery. I therefore make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement. I use a variety of data to make groups for targeted interventions. I look for overall data trends to direct homework and whole class spiraling. I teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals. And I constantly gather informal data to monitor and adjust my teaching on the spot.



Jenny Kaste
Mesquite Elementary School

Crane Elementary District
Fourth-Sixth grade Math

Experience: Eleven years in education including six years as a fourth- through sixth-grade math teacher; served as gifted coordinator, ELL coach, play director, ELL tutor, mentor teacher, team leader, curriculum committee member, math leadership team member, PTO liaison and student council advisor; Teacher of the Year finalist and Presidential Award Nominee

Degrees: B.A. in Education from Elmira College; SEI Endorsement

The Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative honors extraordinary teachers and asks that they each mentor high-potential student teachers.

What sets the program apart from typical student teaching programs is that mentor teachers are selected based on their outstanding student achievement in high-need schools, their ability to mentor new teachers, and the recommendation of their principals and Rodel's observation team. This ensures that student teachers are learning from the best. In addition, Rodel provides further training and support to both mentors and student teachers to assure Promising Student Teacher Graduates start their careers as outstanding educators.

Since 2004, 167 Rodel Exemplary Teachers have been named and more than 650 Rodel Promising Student Teachers have been mentored.

The 2016 Rodel Exemplary Teachers will be announced on November 29 at www.rodelaz.org.