

Sharon Witzansky
Teacher of the Year Nomination

Standard One: *Teachers are committed to students and their learning:* Sharon does an amazing job of connecting students' prior knowledge with her learning goals. She insures that each lesson is based on pre-learned knowledge. She consistently engages students in problem solving and critical thinking, and she continues to make the curriculum more meaningful through her creative lessons. She promotes self-directed, reflective learning for all students. Her higher level math class is one in which she is constantly researching activities to keep her students learning far past the required fifth grade skills. She plays a Stock Market Game and keeps abreast of other math websites, always challenging our most gifted math students. Sharon continues to create a physical environment that engages all students. She has established excellent classroom management techniques where each student feels responsible for being a productive learner because she instills in them self-pride. She excels in using the instructional time effectively. She is known for her no-nonsense approach and poor behavior is not tolerated. Parents often comment on how well she teaches her students to become independent learners and they are more than ready for middle school.

Standard Two: *Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students:* Sharon is a very experienced, knowledgeable and professional teacher. She keeps abreast of all the current research in education. She excels in keeping the lessons geared for each individual learner. She develops student understanding through instructional strategies that are appropriate to the subject matter. She incorporates 21st century skills into her classroom including collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking.

Standard Three: *Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning:* Sharon has managed to develop and sequence instructional material for her fifth grade students. She has learned to modify instructional plans to adjust for our special needs and more advanced students. She knows how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole. She has been a leader on Power School and integrates technology frequently to assist in managing and monitoring student learning. Her fifth grade students frequently use their iPads to assist with their learning.

Standard Four: *Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience:* Sharon is a very intelligent teacher – she reads up on current practices and is always willing to try new things. She critically examines her practice on a regular basis to deepen her knowledge and incorporate new findings into her teaching.

Standard Five: *Teachers are members of learning communities:* This year Sharon has served as the Site leadership person, the district 5th grade lead, a member of the district Technology Committee and a member of the District Teaching and Learning Committee. Sharon establishes professional goals and pursues opportunities to improve professional practices. She works with her colleagues and is known to be a team player. She is passionate about her job and it shows. She talks the talk and walks the walk. She is a superstar!