



PRESENTS THE TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Angela Brannon Teacher's constant learning enables her to teach students.

To Angela Brannon, special education teacher at Williams

diagnostic tool, but also as a motivator for her students. "We do regular testing, and graph the results. The graphs show the kids that they're improving and getting closer to their goals," she says. This concrete proof of the ways their hard work is paying off helps keep them committed to success.

Elementary, teaching success is defined by her students' ability to leave her behind. "My goal is to help students achieve grade-level mastery and independence," she says. She knows she's been successful when they simply don't need her any more and can rejoin their classmates.

Ms. Brannon says that about half of her students each year achieve this ultimate goal. "It would be great if it were 100 percent, and actually, some are right on the edge" of that success.

Ellen Mooney, Williams Elementary principal, says that impressive achievement is an enormous one for students. "To see students exit from special education is a real accomplishment, and Angela has had quite a few of those successes. I've worked with her for 11 years, and I've seen many times how she's been able to help her students, giving them the encouragement they need to succeed," Ms. Mooney says.

Ms. Brannon says she employs a variety of methods to do that. "I'm constantly learning," she says. "The district offers professional seminars, and I make sure to keep up with those. I take at least one each month," she says.

Putting that learning to work in the classroom, and coupling it with innovations she's developed over the years is the next step.

"My biggest challenge is motivating my students. They know they're not achieving with the other kids, so I have to convince them we can make it better for them. To do this, I talk them through it, and turn lessons into games. I get them involved in the process of strategizing and make learning real. I show them how they can apply math skills to every day life, and if they're weak in reading, I bring in restaurant menus and point out to them that reading skills are critical every day."

Ms. Brannon views testing not only as a

Like most educational successes, Ms. Brannon's are accomplished with a team. Classroom teachers may refer students to the school's diagnostician, who then develops a plan of attack with Ms. Brannon. She completes the circle by working with teachers to create a curriculum, which she then implements to help her students achieve grade-level mastery.

"Ms. Brannon works with all grade levels, kindergarten through fifth grade, and coordinates with teachers. She has to have a good working relationship with those teachers, and she really does," Ms. Mooney says.

Ms. Brannon's influence on Williams Elementary transcends individual students, however. In addition to serving on the Campus Improvement Team, which works to develop TAKS improvement strategies, she also serves on the board of the school's PTA.

"I've been actively involved on the PTA for four years. I like knowing what's going on throughout the building. I guess I'm like a mother hen – I like taking care of everyone," she says.

Ms. Mooney concurs. "It really impresses me that she serves on the PTA board. It's so helpful to have a teacher on the board to offer the teachers' perspective on issues," she says.

Whether she's working with students in small groups or one on one, Ms. Brannon says that after spending all 14 of her teaching years in the Garland school district, she can't imagine being anywhere else.

Ms. Mooney is happy to hear that. "We're very glad to have her on our staff," she says of this dedicated, inspiring teacher who improves not only her campus but also her students' lives in a myriad of ways. Congratulations to Angela Brannon, Garland ISD Teacher of the Month.



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