



# P R E S E N T S   T H E TEACHER OF THE MONTH



## Jennifer Farrar Teacher brings lessons to life to make science memorable for students

"I teach like my hair is on fire," says

Jennifer Farrar, science teacher at The Classical Center at Brandenburg Middle School and this month's Garland ISD Teacher of the Month. "It gets kids' attention. I kind of put on a show, and they remember a lot more of what I'm teaching."

That innovation and willingness to step outside the box not only helps Ms. Farrar's students retain her memorable lessons, it has garnered her attention and accolades during her six years as a teacher, including a nomination as 2008 Texas Teacher of the Year.

Dramatic teaching methods don't come as a second nature to Ms. Farrar, but this learned trait has served her well throughout her career. "I had a teacher who always said, 'Go outside your comfort zone, and after you do that regularly, you won't be outside your comfort zone anymore.' I have found that to be true," Ms. Farrar says.

Her own teachers brought learning to life by implementing "hair on fire" techniques themselves, Ms. Farrar remembers.

"My chemistry teacher did this kind of teaching by incorporating songs, poems and metaphors to teach such an intimidating subject," she says. "The concepts were simplified and gave me the confidence to succeed in her class. She had a way of making each individual student feel special, and her influence has impacted the person I am today. "By spending time with my students and developing relationships, I have gained knowledge of their individual learning styles to allow them the confidence and comfort of knowing that each of them can succeed in my classroom," she says.

Ms. Farrar says she had always wanted to be a teacher, but she says her mother, a teacher for 30 years, said, "Are you sure? Are you sure?" With that query in the back of her mind, Ms. Farrar pursued a major in public relations. After receiving her bachelor's degree from

Texas State University, she went to work in her chosen field for a state senator. "But I soon knew that was not where my heart was," she says.

Ms. Farrar learned of a teaching position in Lancaster and received her certification during the first of her two years there. She found her way to Garland ISD in 2003 and has been there ever since. "I love it!" she says enthusiastically.

That love of teaching is embodied in Ms. Farrar's high level of involvement in her school and with the district. "I pride myself in going beyond what is expected of a teacher. I want to foster the lifelong learning skills so that students are prepared to be a larger part of a functioning economy."

Going beyond the basic job description for Ms. Farrar includes mentoring the National Junior Honor Society at Brandenburg and participating in the Campus Improvement Team, where she collaborates with administrators, counselors, parents and fellow teachers to determine where the campus needs improvements, she says.

During the summer, Ms. Farrar serves the district by working with a group of educators to re-evaluate the district curriculum and rewrite or adjust the lessons based on the students' needs, she says.

Ms. Farrar also serves as a mentor to new teachers on the school's staff. "Working as a mentor teacher to new educators allows me to see the everyday struggles and challenges that a new teacher faces. This gives me the opportunity to contribute my previous knowledge and skills to lend a hand to the less experienced, as well as learn new ideas from a fresh perspective," she says.

Stepping out of her comfort zone to teach creatively and stepping up to serve her school effectively have created in Ms. Farrar a teacher who makes a difference every day in the lives of her students, her co-workers and her community. Congratulations to a deserving Garland ISD Teacher of the Month.



*Always there when you need us!*

[www.garlandpower-light.org](http://www.garlandpower-light.org)