



PRESENTS THE TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Paul Reyna Teacher's enthusiasm, energy, create learning and new programs wherever he goes

Schrade
Middle

Schrade Middle School's sixth-grade science teacher, Paul Reyna, doesn't just talk the talk; he's got a successful track record and a full menu of accomplishments to his credit. In just his first year at Schrade, Mr. Reyna taught for the previous 16 years at Garland's Lyles Middle School, where he brought some of his favorite hands-on teaching practices to fruition to benefit his students and the school as a whole. He plans to repeat that success at Schrade.

The Victoria, Texas, native graduated from Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos with his teaching degree and a specialization in earth and life sciences.

"My mother instilled in me a love of science. She's a naturalist, and fascinated me with the world of bugs and growing things," Mr. Reyna says. That early interest bloomed throughout his life, and he enjoys passing along this fascination to his students.

"One of my most important goals is to have my students excited about science as they walk out of class still thinking about the concepts of the day. Real-world use and immediate relevancy of concepts tend to leave a more indelible image burned in their minds. Often, parents will share with me lessons taught to them by their children about what happened in class. When the student is willing to share what they have learned, they have become the teacher. This is one of the best forms of validation that I could receive," he says.

That "real-world use" and "relevancy of concepts" came into play in a very concrete way while Mr. Reyna taught at Lyles. While there, he developed the school's Outdoor Learning Center (OLC). He applied for and received grants to fund this extensive project, then cultivated the land to prepare it for planting. Together with his students and other staff members, Mr. Reyna grew a variety of vegetables, perennials, and even roses, enabling the students to learn many important life sciences lessons first hand.

"I'm a hands-on teacher. With the OLC, kids

can learn horticultural techniques in a very real way. Even our social studies teachers used the OLC in discussions of the agrarian society, and the art teacher used it too. We found that the OLC had a very calming effect on the kids, and they could take home what they learned. Many started gardens of their own at home after observing the success we had," Mr. Reyna says.

After 16 years at Lyles, however, Mr. Reyna says he felt he needed a new set of challenges, and discovered Schrade. "Coming to Schrade felt like when I was first at Lyles. The people have been so warm and welcoming," said Mr. Reyna. He's also excited to take on the challenge of getting a new OLC off the ground - literally.

Schrade principal Jim Thomas says, "Mr. Reyna has been a wonderful addition to our science staff here at Schrade. This is Mr. Reyna's first year at Schrade, but his reputation precedes him. His cooperation with administration and helpful nature make him a great fit."

Mr. Reyna has been recognized outside the Garland ISD as well. He's a five-time Who's Who of American Teachers, the winner of a variety of grants, a Texas Medical Association Merit Award Winner for the creation of lesson plans pertaining to blood types, and he established a video library of 185 science-related videos at Lyles. Mr. Reyna has also served as a textbook consultant for Prentice-Hall's textbook publishing division.

With all those well-deserved accolades, does Mr. Reyna find himself yearning for greener pastures? "I am very happy to be working in Garland ISD because of the level of support that I get from my district, principals, colleagues, and parents. I feel blessed to have worked with over 3,000 students and have enjoyed sharing the adventure of learning with them," Mr. Reyna says.

Schrade Middle School is equally blessed to have on board a dedicated and gifted staff member like Paul Reyna, Garland ISD's Teacher of the Month.



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