

## Winners

This past weekend it was my great privilege to do a bit of reading. Not just some pulp novel, no, something important. As a member of the committee to choose Pearland ISD's Teachers of the Year, I got to read application materials submitted by a few of the district's best and brightest. Not only was I impressed in the usual ways by what they wrote (by their educational attainment, their writing ability, and their organizational skills), but also by what were clearly some recurring themes in the essays. Here is just a small sampling of what they believe:

- That a love of learning, and especially of books and of reading, on the part of teachers themselves is crucial to student success (at all levels);
- That parent involvement in the process is the single most important factor in whether a child becomes educated;
- That teachers become mentors and role models because they benefited mentors and role models themselves;
- That community involvement is central and important in their own lives;
- That teaching is not just a career or even a profession to them, it's a "calling" (several used this term).

Please don't ask me to tell you who won; I simply don't know. All I did was score each applicant against a rubric that included several criteria. Differentiating even to this degree was difficult. They were all winners before they even got to this point by being teachers of the year on their seventeen home campuses, respectively, and they will all still be winners after a few are singled out for additional honors. In fact, they were winners even before being selected to represent their schools. Why? Because they chose to be teachers, and because at some point, each decided to pursue excellence as a way of life. All 17 have succeeded, and our kids are the beneficiaries.

Dr. David A. Watson  
President, Board of Trustees, Pearland ISD