

## **Superintendent's 2021 Teacher of the Year Remarks**

*Look in the eyes of trouble with a smile,  
Extend your hand and do not be afraid.  
'Tis but a friend who comes to masquerade.  
And test your faith and courage for awhile.*

*Fly, and he follows fast with threat and jeer.  
Shrink, and he deals hard blow on stinging blow,  
But bid him welcome as a friend, and lo!  
The jest is off – the mask will disappear.*

“The Masquerade” by American author and poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox may have been published in 1911, but its relatability has never been greater than this school year. Listen again...

***Look in the eyes of trouble with a smile,  
Extend your hand and do not be afraid***

August 6, 2020, you – our teachers – did just that. Knowing the importance of education for our students and their possible nervousness, you greeted them with smiling eyes and often outstretched high-fives and elbows...

***'Tis but a friend who comes to masquerade.  
And test your faith and courage for awhile.***

Yes, our students (or as our elementary school teachers say “our friends”) were nervous, but I know you were anxious as well. While you knew every possible precaution was put into place, you still had to practice faith and courage for the betterment of our students.

***Fly, and he follows fast with threat and jeer.  
Shrink, and he deals hard blow on stinging blow,***

As professionals in your craft, you were able to find that delicate balance of providing a high-quality, engaging learning experience while mitigating the risks.

***But bid him welcome as a friend, and lo!  
The jest is off – the mask will disappear.***

Our teachers embraced the challenges the pandemic provided us; you welcomed the opportunity to reimagine education. You found solutions to make the school year possible and in the process have discovered ways to improve the education we provide for years to come. We may have had to wear masks that partially hid our faces this year, but we have not hidden from our challenges and are better for it.

Thank you! On behalf of the students of St. Charles Parish Public Schools, thank you and your families for the many daily sacrifices you have made to put our students' futures first. Thank you for ensuring every student matters and every moment counts.

I would also like to say thank you to the people who worked to make tonight's ceremony so special. Please hold your applause until everyone has been recognized.

- Shell Norco for their generous donation in sponsoring tonight's event and Cox Communications
  
- Our Mistress of Ceremonies – Tresa Webre
  
- Satellite Center Advanced TV Broadcasting team members and facilitator Sam Clement for production assistance
  
- Public Information Department
  - Director Stevie Crovetto
  - Coordinators Regina McMillan & Mason Dauphin
  - Senior Secretary Stacey DeJean

Please join me in thanking all of the people who have worked so hard to make this a special and memorable event!!!

Strong Start 2020 – a branding that we will not soon forget. The word start indicates a beginning, an impetus. But as you know, our journey as teachers never ends; even one day when we “officially retire” we do not stop being teachers. It is in our blood; it remains in our hearts. But, that does not mean we don't need to recharge along the way. I hope each of you experienced a recharge for your calling through this teacher of the year experience. As a small token of appreciation and to help you recharge your tools and resources in this semi-virtual year, each of our 16 teachers of the year is being given a charging station for their personal use.

To close my comments, I would like to congratulate each and every one of you and look forward to the day soon in the future when I can reiterate the closing of Ellen Wheeler Wilcox's poem.

***The jest is off – the mask will disappear.***