

I am Teresa Moton. I am honored and humbled that I have been selected as Yazoo County School District's Teacher of the Year. I completed my undergraduate studies at Jackson State University on a full academic scholarship. I then matriculate to Mississippi College where I earned my Master's degree.

My first teaching job was at Goodman-Pickens Elementary where I taught first grade and tutored second and third-graders after school. I am currently in my eleventh year of teaching at Linwood Elementary. Currently, I teach fifth grade math and science. I am also a 21<sup>st</sup> Century afterschool tutor- teaching Language Arts, Math, and Character Education.

I have a very strong sense of family. Family is an integral part of my life. My parents are Albert and Katherine Richardson. I am the eldest of seven children and reside in Bentonina with my husband of 16 years, Eddie. I am a member of New Pleasant Grove M.B. Church where I serve as a choir member, Sunday school teacher, and member of the Mission Ministry. I also work with the youth, helping to organize and present programs.

I believe that teaching is important, challenging, and rewarding. I will even say it is a calling. Teachers have the power to light a fire under a child that will never die out. At the same time, they have the power to kill the flame before it ever catches fire. My job does not end at the close of a regular work day. I constantly reflect on what I need to do or change in order to help all of my students learn to the best of his/her ability. I make great efforts to teach beyond the books and let my students know that I expect more from them than just a correct answer. Teaching is collaboration between teacher and students. I want my students to feel the love I have for them as individuals and know that I care about them beyond the walls of our school. It is with great hope that the love I have for learning, transfers to the young people I stand before every day- coaching, cheering on, and encouraging.

Teaching is not only collaboration between students and teacher, but between teachers as well. I am fortunate to work with a group of people who work toward the same common goal day in and day out. Encouragement goes a long way with children and adults alike. On an ending note, I would like to relay a sentiment shared with me many years ago by my middle school teacher: "Climb, though the rocks be rugged, and not even the sky will be the limit."