

It is my absolute pleasure to nominate Mrs. Laura Weakland, fourth grade teacher at Dolsen Elementary, for *Oakland County's Outstanding Teacher of the Year*. Mrs. Weakland's passion for teaching is evident in all that she does for her students, their families, Dolsen Elementary, and our community. My family has been fortunate to have had Mrs. Weakland as a teacher two years in a row. She was our twin sons' fourth grade teacher last year and our daughter's fourth grade teacher this year. Mrs. Weakland always goes above and beyond the already high expectations required of an educator, which is evident through our children's academic and social progress. She also truly helped build our children's self-confidence, increase their love for learning, and helped them grow as independent, life-long learners.

Mrs. Weakland's use of technology in the classroom has motivated our children to want to learn. Our boys became more excited to read so that they could blog about the books that they were reading. They even blogged with classrooms from Canada, and used Skype to talk with the famous author of *Rump*, Liesl Shurtliff. She also video-taped one of our boys' book commercials and posted it on a program called Aurasma. That improved his confidence, which increased his passion for writing. Our daughter often expresses her excitement to use Chromebooks in class for writing. Mrs. Weakland's website is extremely useful and user-friendly. It is very organized, includes weekly newsletters, links that help promote and reinforce student learning, and has study guides for all future assessments.

Mrs. Weakland has challenged our children in all subject areas, and helped prepare them as future learners. Furthermore, she differentiates student instruction, which has been extremely important in helping our children learn according to their own unique abilities. A perfect example was when one of our boys was able to select words from the dictionary to create his own spelling list throughout the year. He learned how to spell these words, and was also able to fully understand their meaning. Mrs. Weakland also possesses a strong classroom management system that keeps the class focused, organized, and create a more efficient and positive learning environment.

Additionally, Mrs. Weakland has portrayed outstanding leadership skills in the school community. She founded Dolsen Elementary's *Taking Care of Others Initiative*, which received second place in the *Oakland School's 2014 Excellence in Education* competition. Mrs. Weakland also mentors and organizes the Helping Hands Club, which encourages student leaders to get the entire school involved in helping others in need. With her guidance, The Helping Hands Club recently organized a school-wide fundraiser for Alex's Lemonade Stand, an organization that supports cancer research and kids with cancer. Dolsen raised over \$2,500 in just two months for a wonderful cause.

I was once told that each child gets only two outstanding teachers in twelve years that will leave a lasting impression. It is without a doubt, that Mrs. Weakland is one of these teachers.

Sincerely,

Amani Badillo