

TEACHER OF THE MONTH – September 2014

Kris Merritt – Career & Technical Education, Culinary Arts - SHS

Nominated by: Kathy Redfern

I am recommending Kris Merritt for teacher of the month.

Kris works hard to improve the lives of her students, both with an excellent curriculum, and with varied practical opportunities to cook for others. In her introductory cooking classes, Kris has the students plan and cook a dinner for six people (2 teachers, 2 parents, and 2 friends). In order for her students to have this valuable practice, Kris stays at school until 8 PM or later for a number of weeks, while the dinners are taking place. In addition, Kris has amazing opportunities for her advanced culinary arts class. They cook for the booster club dinners at the football games, which also requires Kris to stay long hours at school. They cater the lunch for the Hi-Q competition, which usually involves about 40 people, and there are other breakfasts, brunches, lunches, and dinners, which go on in the district which Kris and her advanced culinary arts students cater.

This year Kris has started her Artisan Bread Club. It is wonderful both for the students, and for those who are purchasing a loaf of artisan bread each month. I am on the loaf-a-month plan and can personally attest to the excellent quality of this bread. To me, artisan bread seems both labor intensive and time consuming. Kris comes to school at 6:00 AM on the 3 days each month when her class bakes artisan bread, in order to have it ready by the time school gets out. She is putting her organizational skills to good use as she plans and implements this new opportunity for her students.

I am impressed with Kris's love for her students, her drive to make sure they receive many excellent opportunities to practice a wide variety of cooking techniques, and how she is willing to put in many hours outside the school day to make opportunities for her students a reality.