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Paris ISD Names Teachers of the Year

Kristi Berry was named Elementary Teacher of the Year and Bennie Sisson was named Secondary Teacher of the Year for the Paris Independent School District at the staff recognition reception, an annual event recognizing teaching excellence as well as honoring employees for their years of service. Both will represent Paris ISD as its nominees in the 2014 Region VIII Education Service Center Teacher of the Year competition.

Berry is a 1984 graduate of Paris Junior College and a 1987 graduate of Texas A&M-Commerce with a Bachelor of Science in Education. She taught fourth grade at Justiss for 25 years and transferred to second grade this year as a math, science, and social studies teacher. During these years, she served as a mentor to six student teachers. Kristi extends her loving nature by rescuing and caring for homeless animals outside school.

Kristi states, "I believe a 'stand out' teacher must create a positive learning environment in the classroom, and it must start weeks before students arrive for the beginning of the school year. If students see the teacher excited about teaching, they become excited about learning. Building relationships with students should be a #1 priority as each new school year begins. This is necessary for maximum learning to take place."

Sisson graduated "with distinction" from East Texas State University-Commerce in 1995, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree. Using her English/History dual major, Bennie has taught English as a Second Language (ESL) on five Paris ISD campuses: Paris High, Paris Junior High/Travis JH, Crockett Middle School, Paris Alternative School for Success (PASS), and Justiss Elementary. Currently she teaches grades 7-12 ESL, serves on the LPAC Committee, and is a TELPAS supplemental trainer. In 2004 and 2008, she served as the Delta County Precinct Judge.

"High expectations should be set for all students. I believe in the saying, *'My teacher said I could, so I did'*.... My mission is two-fold: (1) to ensure that each English Language Learner develops high levels of English proficiency, while mastering challenging content-area standards of learning, and (2) to prepare the learner for what might lie ahead in his/her life."



Kristi Berry
Elementary Teacher
of the Year



Bennie Sisson
Secondary Teacher
of the Year