



**Kate Stempel voted 2019-2020 Travis Elementary Teacher of the Year  
and named finalist for HISD Elementary Teacher of the Year**

We are thrilled to share that Kate Stempel, voted by her peers as the 2019-2020 Travis Elementary Teacher of the Year, has also been named a finalist by Houston ISD for district-wide Elementary Teacher of the Year accolades. Mrs. Stempel is one of 12 finalists selected from all 280 HISD schools. (Check out the big news [HERE.](#))

“This is a prestigious distinction and a well-deserved honor for Mrs. Stempel,” said Travis Principal Tom Day. “Mrs. Stempel is not only an amazing teacher, but a strong leader on her team and our campus, and a pillar in our community. I am so proud of her and happy she’s getting this recognition.”

Born and raised in Houston, Mrs. Stempel is an HISD graduate of Bellaire High School and in 2008 earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Curry College in Milton, MA, just outside Boston.

After college, Mrs. Stempel returned to Houston where she began her journey in education at Travis as a special education teaching assistant for two years. In 2010, she was promoted to the role of kindergarten teacher, where she has flourished the last 10 years. Said Mrs. Stempel: “This is my happy place. I was not leaving that teaching assistant position until I was a classroom teacher at Travis.”

A member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Mrs. Stempel has served roles at Travis as a Grade Chair and Faculty Advisory Committee representative, as a member of the campus Shared-Decision Making Committee, as Kindergarten Campout chair, and she has co-launched a Dr. Becky Bailey-inspired book club with kindergarten parents.

“Mrs. Stempel is an exceptional teacher in every way – attuned to her students’ academic and social emotional growth and welfare, emphasizing whole child learning and development,” Mr. Day said. “She cultivates a nurturing classroom atmosphere where students explore, connect, think critically, and where they are loved and thrive.

“And she truly embodies and inspires the unique spirit and togetherness of the Travis school community.”

In this uncertain time of separation and school closure, Mrs. Stempel has worked tirelessly in tandem with the kindergarten teaching team in finding creative and impactful ways to connect with students and facilitate

home learning with families. This has extended into the greater Travis community with Mrs. Stempel's coordination of the recent "Travis Teacher Parade" through the Woodland Heights neighborhood and a Travis staff "Group Greet" inspirational video to be shared with families this week. "We just want to celebrate our students' hard work and show them how much we love them and miss them," Mrs. Stempel said.

"Ever since I can remember, I wanted to be a teacher," she added. "Teaching young children is my passion. I truly believe that I was made to be a teacher. I could not be more thankful that life brought me to Travis. This community has become a big piece of my heart and forever a part of my family."

Mrs. Stempel and her husband Kenneth live in West Houston with their son Tyler and their wheaten terrier, Baxter. Tyler is thriving in his third year at Hogg Middle School and plans to attend Westside High School where he will be a part of the Westside Engineering and Geosciences Academy next year. Mrs. Stempel's mother and twin sisters are a car ride away in Austin.

When she is not teaching or planning fun things for us to do here at school, Mrs. Stempel enjoys professional development reading, hanging out at the neighborhood pool, shopping, riding her bike, spending time with family and friends, and wandering the aisles of Target!

Congratulations, Kate Stempel, 2019-2020 Travis Elementary Teacher of the Year and HISD Elementary Teacher of the Year finalist.