

## “Why I Teach”

by Lori Askew  
Region III Teacher of the Year

**A**s a special education teacher, I have the privilege of helping students with unique abilities, struggles, and achievement levels to reach their fullest academic potential. I teach because it is my passion to educate these students. I am very passionate about what I do and it has become my lifetime commitment to give these students the tools with which to succeed in life. I believe that each child is a unique individual who needs a secure and caring environment in which to grow and mature emotionally, intellectually and physically, as well as academically.

In my classroom, I am reminded daily of “The Ugly Duckling” by Hans Christian Andersen. Simply being different isn’t wrong. Do not try to be a duckling if you are born to be a swan. Many children of all ages have difficulties learning from the most minor to the most difficult. Yet these children have been misplaced by society because they do not fit the “standard” set by society. I realized in my career prior to teaching that it was time for me to help change the way that society views these children. It has been my honor and pleasure to be a part of

many of these children’s lives and to see them succeed where others have given up or thought it was impossible! I love what I do especially seeing the rewards on a daily basis.



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