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PRSD nominee brings real-life experiences to new teaching career

BY TIM KALINOWSKI ON MARCH 31, 2017.



Edwin Parr nominee this year.--SUBMITTED PHOTO

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Schuler School teacher Alisha Sims is the Prairie Rose School Division's Edwin Parr teaching award nominee for 2017. According to her principal Jason Duchscherer, Sims is a creative-minded teacher who always brings something extra to the classroom.

"She has brought a lot of new and creative ideas to this small, rural school," confirms Duchscherer. "Alisha has many excellent qualities. One of biggest and best ones she has is her willingness to take risks. For example, she has created a website for student writing. She also uses Twitter effectively and creatively to improve instructional practice, and as a communication tool for the school."

There are specific challenges in rural schools all teachers have to face, says Duchscherer— some struggle to cope with them, while others rise to the occasion. Sims is one of those teachers who always rises to meet those challenges head on, he says.

"We have multi-grade classrooms, we have video-conferencing and there is a lot of juggling (between tasks)... Alisha teaches Junior High Language Arts, Grade 7/8 Science, Division 2 Science, and Grade 3/4 Math. She has a food class. That is a big mixture. You really need to be a jack-of-all-trades in rural schools, and we are very lucky we have Alisha, who is able to juggle all those tasks very effectively."

Sims credits her former career as a journalist for this ability. Sims was once an editor with both the Medicine Hat News and the Lethbridge Herald.

"Looking back, if I had gone into this career as a fresh-faced 19-year-old out of small town Manitoba, I would not be as good of a teacher — I think I bring far bigger skillset now ... Having had that whole other career before this, I am able to now bring real-life examples into the classroom."

Sims, who is a mother of two, also brings some practical life experience to the job. This gives her confidence to tackle any task in the classroom.

"Being able to do things outside of the box, and do things differently from the ways they have always been done, this award recognizes that. While I might have some crazy ideas, they are great crazy ideas," she says with a laugh.






Six outstanding first-year teachers in the province will be recognized by the Alberta School Board Association's this fall. Each school division is asked to submit one nominee.

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