**2019 CIT Interns of the Year**

**Opening Remarks from Superintendent Dan Lowengard and RTA Treasurer Aimee Rinere**

**Opening Remarks from Stefan Cohen, CIT Director:**

My favorite thing about this celebration is that it gives us an opportunity to step back and talk about what really matters about the field of education in Rochester. Numbers are important; data is important; scores, ratings, reports have an impact, but tonight we celebrate something timeless, the way that dedicated, hard-working professionals, with joy in their hearts, bring their experience and their passion to do the real work of changing kids’ lives for the better.

Take a look around this room, and you will see a powerful counter-narrative to all the dispiriting noise about the state of our schools. You are in the company of 170+ teachers who have not given up on the idea that a career in teaching is a noble one, and that all the hard work, challenges and heartbreak are worth the rewards of making a difference in the lives of our students.

For over thirty years, our CIT program, this partnership between our supportive RCSD and our professionally minded Rochester Teachers Association, has shown what we can do when we work together for the betterment of our kids. We can harness the expertise, wisdom, and leadership of our best veteran educators, without taking them from the classroom, and leverage it to support our next generation of colleagues as they begin their careers. Our CIT Lead Teachers help their colleagues when they struggle, and challenge them to excel when they thrive, customizing their support based on what they need to succeed in their own buildings and classrooms, with their own specific students, and based on their own specific professional needs.

So let’s take this opportunity to recognize the remarkable contributions of some of our most veteran, treasured Lead Teacher Mentors, who have decided to put their considerable skill and passion into a new chapter of their storied careers. At the end of this school year, we will reluctantly bid farewell to

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| **Mentor LN, FN** | **Assignment** | **Mentor Since . . .** |
| Boehm-Morelli, Helen | School Psychologist | 1999 |
| Bogues, Lorna | Special Education | 2013 |
| Decker, Barbara | Elem pre-K Tech Support | 2015 |
| Dunne, Daniel | Social Studies Bilingual | 2004 |
| Espinosa, Lucia | ESOL & Bilingual | 2004 |
| Feinberg, Jeffrey M. | Special Education, ESOL | 1996 |
| Mueller, Marybeth | Health | 1997 |
| Schulmerich, Johnnie | Special Education | 2016 |
| Vadala, Margaret | Special Education | 2012 |
| Chandra Cunningham | Kindergarten & Long-time Panel Member | |

You can’t help but be inspired by the eleven teachers and counselors we honor today. If there is a common theme that unites them, it is that they share a commitment to form genuine relationships with their students, and to keep growing as professionals in order to serve them. The depth of caring demonstrated by these eleven awesome educators-- nominated and selected from the 371 new teacher “Interns” that were supported by CIT Mentors in 2018-2019--renews my belief in the power of our profession. CIT also assisted 142 teachers with “professional support,” and supplied independent evaluation to 136 more.

There were 11 other teachers nominated for this award, and through the generosity of our RTA, we will be honoring them with a gift and recognition at their schools over the next week. Let’s have a round of applause for our Intern of the Year “Finalists.”

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| Megan | Adanti | Special Education | Resource 9th-12th | Wilson Comm |
| Madison | Carter | Special Education | 4th 12:1:1 | #43 |
| Gianna | Filiaci | Special Education | Resource, CT 9th-12th | Leadership Acad for Young Men |
| Jeffrey | Fose | Elementary | 1st | #50 |
| Dominique | Matties | Elementary | 3rd | #09 |
| Brianna | Olschewske | Speech | K-6 | #05 |
| Ashley | Paris | Speech | K-6 | #04 |
| Anthony | Pullano | Science | Physics 9th-12th | Northeast College |
| Emily | Sharpe | Math | Geometry 9th-10th | Wilson Comm |
| Courtney | Smart | Special Education | 5th ICOT | #43 |
| Elizabeth | Sweet | Special Education | 7th,8th 15:1 | #03 |

Our district can be a challenging place to teach. With the support of their CIT Mentors, school building colleagues, administrator leaders, teachers’ union, and supportive families (who we welcome today), our new teachers get opportunities to do their best work; to reflect on their students’ academic progress, on their own professional growth, and on the positive impact they have on our kids and our community.

A program like this would not exist without its own support, and we are lucky to have the support of our district leadership, and of our teacher union leadership.

From the district: Thank you to Superintendent Dan Lowengard, Chief of Staff Linda Cimusz, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, Cecelia Golden

From the Union: Thank you to RTA President Adam Urbanski, Treasurer Aimee Rinere, 1st VP John Pavone, 2nd VP Margaret Sergent

From the CIT Governing Panel:

and from the families who have joined us today.

Also, I need to thank Annamaria Manso and her team of mentors for putting this occasion together with such class and care: Tammy Shaw & Donna Johnson, & Kay Cordello in our CIT Office.

**Jordan Addison**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**Third Grade, School #22 Tracey Barnwell Clinton Bell**

Recognizing the work of Jordan Addison at School #22 is an appropriate way to start us off. In the same way that we are applauding great teaching tonight, Jordan celebrates his students in regular Harambe sessions in the gym at School #22. Harambe is a Kenyan tradition that translates from the Swahili as "all pull together." Jordan uses it to celebrate his students' culture to develop their sense of self-worth and to give them encouragement to succeed throughout the day. His mentor describes his "unique and wonderful rapport with kids,” and how he “connects with his students by educating in a creative and engaging fashion." He shows "amazing patience [and a] desire to make things better for them all." "Born Leader.” "Beloved by so many." Look for the FISTBUMP poster outside his door.

**Julie Rossette**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**School Counselor, PTECH Lisa Kasdin Steven Humphrey, Latresha Fuller**

Julie Rossette is a new counselor, but not new to our RCSD students. She worked for several years as a Center for Youth counselor in our schools before taking her current position. Her mentor shared that her restorative circle is “a masterpiece in creating respect and rapport among a group of challenging girls.” Her students say “you listen, you don’t judge,” and “it’s different talking to you.” She is another building leader, who is also the facilitator for the Gay Straight Alliance and assists with the PTECH Step Team.

**Marlene Crawford Plunkett**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**Special Ed, Eighth Grade 8:1:2, School #8 Cassandra Walsh Stephanie Thompson  
Laurel Avery-Detoy**

Marlene’s Crawford Plunkett’s mentor describes coming in a week before school watching her scramble to get her room together, and was amazed to return during the first week of school to see a “jumbled room turned into the most welcoming space for her students.” All the other adults in the room were actively involved in engaging her students, and her mentor had “the intangible sense that they were a family working and building through ths school year together.” Her principal describes her as “a fully invested teacher . . . who “stepped into this position with a joyful heart!”

**Alicia Calkins**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**Speech, School #45 Lauren Moravec Rhonda Morien**

Ms. Calkins has created a warm, kid-friendly, organized, bright and colorful office space at School #45. Her mentor emphasizes her “pro-active” work to “anticipate the needs of her kids” and uses “well planned, . . . fun, engaging lessons” to manage her pre-K through grade 8 caseload. She is professional, caring, as seen in her “kind, enthusiastic, positive” approach that validates and encourages her students. Her rapport with her kids is obvious, and her mentor writes that she goes “above and beyond [as] an exceptional employee at School #45.”

**Terry Fitch**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**Special Education, GEM 12:1:4, grades 9-10, Edison Donna Johnson Megan Bonacci, Jacob Scott**

Terry Fitch works in the GEM program at Edison. This is the acronym for Growth and Education for Students with Multiple Disabilities. Her mentor writes that Terry’s students “enter the room happy and ready to learn.” She has a “friendly, welcoming, heart-felt demeanor” and she has fully engaged the other adults in the room “to collaborate with her and work confidently with all students.” She “gives all students a voice in the learning experience” and is “extremely knowledgeable about each of their needs.” The “wonderful relationships” she has developed helps her engage her students, who demonstrate “an eagerness for learning” and “are enthusiastic as they interact with Terry, the other adults and each other.”

**Anjoli Moise**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**Kindergarten, School #5 Sonja Griffin Terrilyn Hammond**

Anjoli started with her mentor in the middle of the 2017-2018 school year. One observer writes that she has “great instincts and a positive energy, . . . enthusiast and encouraging, totally in the moment with her students. Anyone would want his or her child to be in this classroom.” Her mentor writes that she integrates “character development” and “community building” into her lessons, involving her students as “problem solvers” in the classroom. She uses music and movement to make learning fun. She is a “culturally responsive educator that demonstrates through her teaching practice that she truly loves her studnets ansd wants them to be successful.”

**Anthony Lupia**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**Science 7-8, School #45 Lisa Englert Rob Snyder, Rhonda Morien**

Mr. Lupia’s mentor highlights the varied activities he uses to engage his middle school students and excite their interest in science. He incorporates movement and discussion, collaborative grouping, and he challenges them intellectually.” His mentor describes him as a “genuinely caring educator” who welcomes his kids at the door with a friendly greeting, and uses “courtesies, complements, and positive reinforcements” to create a warm, respectful classroom. I want to get into Mr. Lupia’s room in order to meet his bearded dragon Norbert. Anthony’s mentor writes that his students are learning responsibility in caring for their class pet, and empathy for all living creatures. When Mr. Lupia allows students to hold Norbert during class, students remind each other to be “extra quiet . . . so we don’t scare him.”

**Sarah Berry**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**First Grade, School #45 Tina Bowman Heather Belanger, Rhonda Morien**

Ms. Berry’s mentor is inspired by Sarah’s relationships with her first graders. The mentor writes that “she truly cares about each of them,” and this can be seen in “her calm, loving demeanor,” and the way she handles “behavior challenges.” Students self-assess their progress, and she used an interest inventory to develop incentives for individual students. One observer noted the “enthusiasm, kindness, and care woven into each interaction with her students.” Her mentor shared that she “prepares and rehearses her lessons so they are engaging targeted and cohesive,” and she is skilled at delivering immediate, constructive feedback as part of a “strong instructional program. She has developed a deep knowledge of her students’ strengths and needs, and her efforts have resulted in tremendous accelerated growth.” Faced with a challenging class, her mentor says that Sarah “takes it all in stride; never giving up, always ready to learn something new, and putting her students’ needs above all else.” One visitor to the school shared with me that Sarah’s colleagues stopped her in the hallway, unprompted, to tell this visitor how good she is with students and what a good teacher she is.”

**Terrell Cunningham**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**Social Studies VII-VIII, School #3 Donna Johnson Jenna Ricigliano, Pamela Rutland**

Mr. Cunningham’s mentor writes that he “models respect and encouraging language throughout each lesson, and in return the students are respectful toward him and each other.” He welcomes his kids individually at the door, and within a minute of entering the room, his middle school students have collected their materials, moved to their seats, and are ready to learn. His mentor describes his “natural leadership skills.” Other teachers come to him for suggestions and support, and his mentor brings other teachers to visit his classroom to learn about how he established his classroom community. He encourages his students with positive energy and high expectations to produce “high school responses!” He works to make the content relevant, uses storytelling to deliver content, and engages students in discussions with strategies that acknowledge them as learners, and make it safe for them to “take risks in sharing out answers and ideas.”

**Sara Wright**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**Music, School #8 Alison Schmitt Mark Learo, Laurel Avery-Detoy**

Her mentor writes that “Sara already teaches with the demeanor and professionalism of a seasoned veteran.” She is “warm, welcoming, firm and fair,” and that as a result of her “hard work, relationship building, consistency, [partnership with colleagues], and communication with families, the vast majority of her students arrive “ready and eager to learn.” She gives her kids leadership opportunities, and she makes it safe for her kids to “take musical risks,” such as singing alone or with others. Her mentor cites pacing as a strength, and is well prepared with developmentally appropriate lessons that “alternate between active and static activities” to ensure her kids remain engaged. Students approached a visitor, unprompted, to share how much they like Sara, and to tell about the specific things she does for them. Her mentor describes Sara as a “local celebrity at School #8” with students poking their heads in to greet her and often visiting her at lunch.

**Kari McCree**

Assignment Mentor Supervisor

**English VII, VIII, School #12 Mariana Barry Faith Hart, Vicky Gouveia**

Kari’s mentor is a teacher at Kari’s alma mater, School Without Walls (and her mentor was also my student back in a previous century). Her mentor writes that “Kari greets every student at the door and it is clear in their interactions that her students are excited to see her.” It is a student-centered classroom, with walls “filled with student work and silent teachers.” Kari uses call and response to keep things focused and maintain her high expectations for behavior and learning. Her mentor highlights Kari’s skills as an “incredible planner” who uses culturally responsive teaching approaches to engage her kids and meet their individual learning needs. She maintains a “smile and an energetic demeanor,” and in a challenging middle school environment, has created a comfortable environment where students feel free to ask for help and use peers for assistance. One visitor noted that Ms. McCree had clearly put considerable work into building relationships with her students to engage them as active participants, and was struck by Ms. McCree’s passion, enthusiasm, and strong desire for student success. Her kids feel it, too.