



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

James Becker Thomson Award for Excellence in Special Education

Ross S. Sterling teacher Ann Reilly received the James Becker Thomson Award for Excellence in Special Education, presented by Dr. Thomas Kelchner, director of Special Education, at the recent "Hats Off" celebration honoring District and Campus Teachers of the Year and GCCISD retirees. The award was established by Dr. Richard Thomson in honor of his brother, James, and is presented annually to a Goose Creek CISD teacher.

Reilly knew she wanted to be a Special Education teacher when she was in elementary school, and she is pleased to have been able to fulfill that dream in Goose Creek. Although her sister had special needs, Ann's extended family and friends accepted her and included her in all of their activities, and she accepts no less for her students.

"I feel I am an advocate for my students and their families. I am in a position of understanding some of what they are living with because I have been there," she said. "Families going through the Special Education process and transitioning out of school to the 'real world' are challenges for which my personal journey gives me a unique perspective."

With her Life Skills students, success is often seen in small increments, but Ann is quick to remind herself and her students' parents to consider where they started and to look at how much they've progressed. She finds it exciting to collaborate with administrators, counselors, coordinators, and other teachers and staff to develop the best plan for a child and to see it work.



Ross S. Sterling High School teacher Ann Reilly receives the news that she is the recipient of the James Becker Thomson Award for Excellence in Special Education. Pictured are (l to r) Dr. Don Beck, principal of RSS; Reilly; Dr. Thomas Kelchner, director of Special Education and Susan Jackson, assistant principal at RSS.

The bonds she forms with her students and their families often extend beyond graduation, and she is pleased to see some former students working in businesses around Baytown.

"She is passionate about her program, loves children, works well with parents, and goes to bat for her kids to get them involved in all kinds of activities," said Don Beck, RSS principal.

"Ann is that rare teacher who, even after 34 years, gets up in the morning and says, 'Yes! I get to go to work today to see my kids,'" said Susan Jackson, RSS assistant principal for Special Education.

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