



CHANGEMAKERS: CELESTE MARIE ALEXANDER

NOMINATED BY MICHAEL WALKER

Michael Walker, assistant director and teacher center coordinator at the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative, shines the spotlight on Celeste Marie Alexander, teacher excellence coordinator and special projects coordinator at the same organization, for her leadership and contributions to professional learning in education. “Her efforts have brought about tangible and transformative changes in the school system, making her a true catalyst for positive change in education,” Walker said in his nomination.

“Dr. Celeste Marie Alexander consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to improving the recruitment, retention, and instructional effectiveness of teachers in Arkansas, ultimately benefiting students,” Walker notes. “She works closely with school districts, supporting their recruitment and retention efforts in a proactive and individualized manner. She embraces the motto ‘whatever it takes’ to support schools and educators.”

ALIGNMENT WITH THE STANDARDS

“Dr. Alexander’s work aligns closely with several of Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning, demonstrating her commitment to fostering effective professional development initiatives that positively impact educators and students. It showcases her dedication to promoting equity, fostering professional expertise, designing effective learning experiences, providing leadership, and leveraging resources effectively to support educator growth and student success.

“She establishes a compelling vision according to the Leadership standard by advocating for the importance of professional development by sharing evidence of its impact, sustaining support to build educator capacity, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. In line with the Learning Designs standard, Dr. Alexander’s workshops are designed with relevant and contextualized learning goals and grounded in research and theories about learning. By enacting evidence-based learning designs, she addresses the Implementation standard, ensuring that educators engage in meaningful and effective learning experiences. Dr. Alexander embraces the Culture of Collaborative Inquiry (standard) through resources and evidence-based practices that support true professional learning.”

IMPACTING TEACHER RETENTION

“Dr. Alexander has contributed to creating a supportive

and empowering environment for educators. ... She implemented a structured mentor-teacher training workshop that led to improved support for preservice teachers and enhanced mentorship opportunities for novice educators, resulting in a more confident and prepared teaching force. Since Dr. Alexander began her work, the number of individuals who have earned their teaching licenses and are fully committed to the teaching profession in local school districts has doubled.

“She has presented the Before You Quit Teaching workshop numerous times, which addresses challenges faced by both veteran and novice teachers, leading to increased job satisfaction, reduced burnout, and improved retention rates.”

PERSONALIZED, ACCESSIBLE LEARNING

“Dr. Alexander’s workshops are grounded in research and standards relevant to educators’ roles, consistent with the Professional Expertise standard. She provides educators with the expertise and skills essential to their professional growth, prioritizing coherence and alignment in their learning experiences.

“Alexander’s offerings are designed with relevant and contextualized learning goals, grounded in research and theories about learning. She has empowered educators at all levels to take ownership of their professional development and growth. By providing them with practical tools and resources, she has enabled educators to navigate challenges effectively and create meaningful impact in their classrooms and schools. Overall, Dr. Alexander’s professional learning initiatives have fostered a culture of excellence, continuous learning, and student-centered focus within the educational system, leading to positive outcomes for both educators and students alike.”

If you would like to nominate a changemaker, visit learningforward.org/changemakers. ■