

**2012 NEBRASKA TEACHER OF THE YEAR:
LUISA PALOMO,
'THE EPITOME OF THE IDEAL TEACHER'**

Luisa Palomo teaches kindergarten at Liberty Elementary School in Omaha. Palomo's excellence in teaching has earned the respect of her colleagues and her students' families as well as the 2012 Nebraska Teacher of the Year award.

Palomo is "the epitome of the ideal teacher," according to Donna Dobson, director of elementary education for Omaha Public Schools. "Ms. Palomo truly loves her students, cares about their families and the learning is active, engaging and with joy.

"There is true joy in her classroom, and I think that is what must be seen to be understood. Ms. Palomo teaches in a high poverty school with a very high percentage of students who are learning English as their second language. Every single child feels the care from Ms. Palomo, and they become a very close group of students." Dobson also noted that the families of her students' include her in their lives, seek her advice and invite her to family events.

Palomo enjoys working with the Omaha Children's Museum as a liaison among her school as well as other schools interested in partnering with the museum. She has participated with community organizations working on revitalizing the area where Liberty Elementary School is located.

Palomo received a Bachelor's Degree in elementary education from Creighton University and a Master's Degree in Educational Administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She holds a teaching endorsement from Concordia University in English as a second language.

In 2010, she received the Alice Buffett Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Palomo is a member of the Omaha Education Association as well as a building liaison for Omaha Children's Museum, a Family/School Advisory Council member, and has made numerous presentations at the school building and school district levels and in the Omaha area.

QUOTES FROM LUISA:

"Caring is not limited to the child learning academic content in my classroom but encompasses the well-being of a child as a whole, as well as the child's family."

"Successful teachers know that students learn in a variety of ways, and that the 'one size fits all' delivery system does not work."

"I benefit as much, if not more, than the organizations that I volunteer with."

"I am happy when students learn content in my room, but I am happiest when I know that all of their needs are met and they are in environments that allow them to grow."



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Kindergarten Teacher
Liberty Elementary School
Omaha, Nebraska



Photos courtesy of Al Koontz

WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

Literacy in the Early Childhood Classroom

The early childhood years are integral in setting the foundation of learning for children. With high stakes testing putting academic pressure on early childhood classrooms, it is important to find a developmentally appropriate way to engage students. This workshop will share a variety of ideas for creating literacy-rich learning environments for young children. Participants will leave the workshop with ideas that can be quickly implemented with their students.

Parent and Family Involvement: Liberty Elementary's School-wide Study Skill Program

Involving parents and families in their child's education is vital to learning and development. This is a current trend in education. This workshop will share Liberty Elementary's school-wide model where all parents are informed, every day, as to their child's learning. It will share how students are empowered to be responsible for their education. Participants will also learn tips for parent communication, for collaboration with all school staff and for fostering strong relationships with parents.

Full Service Community School Model

Liberty Elementary is a school that for ten years has employed the 'full service community school' model. This model employs the ideas that many services, outside of meeting a student's academic needs, are made available through the school for both students and families. Participants will learn how to start partnerships with community organizations and businesses, as well as how a school's climate and culture are impacted once the community school model is employed.

