



Media Release

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Edwin Parr Nominee: Zach Ewing



Congratulations to Grade 4 St. Mary's Catholic School teacher Zach Ewing on being nominated for the Edwin Parr Award! We had the chance to speak with Zach and learn more about his journey through education.

What was your road to becoming a teacher?

I grew up in Spirit River, Alberta, attending Ste. Marie Catholic school and Spirit River Regional Academy. I was blessed to have many amazing teachers, coaches and role models throughout my K-12 education. These teachers and coaches helped shape who I am today. They inspired me to become a teacher and to be a leader for students in the community. After high school, I attended Grande Prairie Regional College and the University of Alberta, where I received my Bachelor of Kinesiology degree and then my Bachelor of Education.

My biggest inspiration to join the teaching profession was my dad, Gary Ewing. My dad taught in the GPSCD for over 30 years. So, I was able to see first-hand the positive impact that a teacher can have on a community and how exciting a teaching career could be. My older brother, Carson, also joined the teaching profession a few years before me. So, I guess you could say that teaching runs in the family!

What age groups do you want to teach?

I hope I can teach all age groups throughout the course of my career. So far, it has been a blast teaching the 9 to 10-year-olds in Grade 4. Each day they come to class with so much energy and excitement, not to mention the countless stories and riddles they like to challenge me with. I also enjoy working with the junior high age group. My experience this year coaching basketball and badminton has been an exciting opportunity to meet students in a special environment outside the classroom.

What is one of your favourite aspects of teaching?

One of the best things about teaching is the fact that no day will ever be the same as the next. Each day comes with its own challenges, opportunities and excitement. I enjoy connecting with each individual student on a personal and academic level.



What does a regular day in your classroom look like?

My day begins early and I'm excited to welcome students at the door with a smile. Our classroom is a very relaxed environment. I encourage the kids to chat with their classmates and myself as our school day begins.

Our day is usually filled with a variety of group work and hands-on activities. Fitness and physical education are a passion of mine, so I ensure that movement is integrated into our lessons and that we take DPA breaks throughout the day. I love teaching in the GPCSD because faith is permeated throughout our daily routines. Our morning and closing prayers are a meaningful way to start and finish the day.

What does being nominated for the Edwin Parr Award mean to you?

I have met several talented first year teachers within the Grande Prairie Catholic School District. So, I feel very honoured knowing that I was selected for this award with so many other remarkable teachers in the district. It is inspiring knowing that my hard work has been recognized by others. It has been a very gratifying experience.

Any advice for new first year teachers?

Expect the unexpected. Rarely is a day executed exactly the way you have it planned. So, roll with the punches, be flexible and don't be too upset if something doesn't work out perfectly. Teaching is one of the most exciting and rewarding careers a person could hope for.

Do you have any additional thoughts about the experience and being selected?

It's such an honour to be selected for the Edwin Parr award. I definitely don't take this award for granted and it has given me more motivation to continue to improve my teaching practice. I feel so blessed to have had my first teaching experience here at St. Mary's. I really feel like this is a staff award because I have been provided with so much support from administration and fellow staff members.

Thank you, Zach, for the interview and for being a source of positive energy for your students and school!

Edwin Parr was the president of the Alberta School Trustees' Association (now ASBA) from 1956 to 1962. He believed that first year teachers were a crucial component of the system and the lives of the children within. After he passed, the ASBA established the Edwin Parr Teacher Award to support the profession and to recognize the efforts made by first year teachers across the province.