

T.E.A.C.H. Award Nomination Letter

Roland Ruvalcaba exemplifies the qualities of the passionate professional you seek to recognize. I have been Mr. Ruvalcaba's Campus Instructional Coordinator since he began his teaching career four years ago. He is a Science teacher, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) teacher, adult education teacher, and athletic coach. His commitment and dedication to his students and his profession is commendable.

As an eighth grade science teacher, Mr. Ruvalcaba is at the top of his profession. His knowledge of and enthusiasm for his content is evident to his colleagues and in turn, contagious. His students find him to be genuine and engaging in his approach so he has no discipline issues, and he keeps Science relevant and personal for them. Stepping into his classroom, one immediately senses that learning is happening in an environment of mutual respect. Mr. Ruvalcaba has a passion for kids and their learning. He manages to voluntarily remain current in his content through staff development and has recently completed his Master's Degree in Integrated Science Curriculum.

Roland Ruvalcaba has been an AVID teacher for three years. The relationships he forms with his students and the drive he instills in them toward excellence is what makes him successful. Last year, I attended the end of the year banquet that he planned for them. He honored each student individually for the commitment they developed to take charge of their education. What he had not expected was the surprise testimonials from his students that followed. His students honored him by speaking of what Mr. Ruvalcaba had done for them. Even the toughest adolescent boys stood up to say that Mr. Ruvalcaba had been like a father to them because he taught them to expect more of themselves and showed them there was no limit to what they could achieve. He took his students on college campus visits to let them visualize what the future holds for them, brought in role models to speak to them about their journeys to success, and taught his students the importance of being a productive member of their community. Mr. Ruvalcaba has had a tremendous impact on his AVID students. I have watched LEP, Special Ed, and underachieving GT students flourish under his guidance. His actions and instructional decisions are always based on doing what is best for kids. I wish every student on our campus could have the benefit of being taught by Mr. Ruvalcaba.

Mr. Ruvalcaba's commitment to students goes beyond the regular school day. Whether it is coaching after school or teaching GED classes in the evening, his dedication continues. Many evenings while working late, I have seen Mr. Ruvalcaba return to his classroom after an afternoon of coaching to continue planning for class. On Saturdays, if he is not attending professional development, he could be found coaching a track meet, taking his students on a trip to the Aquarium in Corpus Christi, a campus visit to UT Austin, an expedition to the Challenger Learning Center, or leading a group of students on a 5K walk to benefit the March of Dimes. The last three years, he has met students at 7 am on Thanksgiving morning at San Antonio's Convention Center to volunteer at the Annual Jimenez Thanksgiving Dinner. He seeks learning opportunities for his students and serves as an inspiration to teachers and students alike. Every child deserves a teacher like him, and a teacher like him deserves to be recognized.