



Dear Extraordinary Teacher,

On behalf of America's students and families, we would like to take a moment during Teacher Appreciation Week to thank you for your work and impact that extends far beyond the boundaries of the classroom. As a new educator, you've no doubt encountered many challenges this year, but you've made it through, learned along with your students, and made a difference to the children in your classroom.

Look up "teacher" in the dictionary and you will likely find this definition: one who instructs. But there are a few adjectives missing from this definition ... patient, knowledgeable, dedicated, compassionate, inspirational ... the list goes on. As a caring professional who connects with students—and strives to discover what they're passionate about to unlock their potential—you do so much more than simply instruct.

You're constantly evaluating what works and what doesn't, making quick adjustments on the fly, and assessing who gets it and who needs a little extra help. You come in early and stay late to give students the one-on-one attention they need. You inspire a lifelong love of learning and guide children's futures. You advocate for children and your profession. And, in the midst of it all, you create safe spaces where kids can be themselves, dig into your own pocket to buy sneakers for a child in need or replenish classroom supplies, heal boo-boos, give hugs, and offer warm, encouraging and affirming words.

For you, there is no such thing as "other people's children." There are only *your kids*—the students you love and nurture as if they were your own. We not only thank you for all you deliver to children; we are proud to stand with you in everything you do to make sure students in every community have access to the great education they deserve. Together, we *are* making a difference for our nation's students.

Thank you for being extraordinary and inspiring students to reach for the stars.

With much gratitude,

Lily Eskelsen García
NEA President