



Memorandum

To: Board of Education
CC: Dr. Debbie Jones, Superintendent
From: Leslee Wright, Director of Communications
RE: Extra Mile Service Award
Date: November 19, 2024

Our November Extra Mile Award was a “Blank Space” until we heard about the beautiful work Shawn Holland is doing. This Bright Field Middle School teacher has made a name for himself with his (Taylor) Swifty Fridays, but it’s his overall commitment to the well-being of our students that made us choose him for this honor.

Shawn was nominated by Bright Field mom Amy Terry who is lucky enough to have Coach Holland as her daughter’s P.E. teacher and bus driver.

Amy wrote, “He is always pleasant and so fun with his Swifty Friday and pauses to point out the sunrise to the kids. He’s just a gem!”

Shawn is a 20-year veteran teacher and bus driver, and in that time he has prioritized safety and fun for his students. He started Swifty Fridays on his bus when he would play Taylor’s hits on the way to school. The day became so popular he decided to duplicate the fun in his P.E. class.

Shawn told us, “During our running warm-ups, I turn on the music, and we will all sing it together. It’s funny to see the students’ behavior change when we are all enjoying something together.”

He added, “Even the boys have given in and let loose of their anti-Swifty ways. It’s created an open and engaging classroom environment for me and my students.”

It’s an open environment that promotes encouragement, forgiveness and second chances—ideas he strongly values. Shawn mentioned teachers who had impacted him earlier in life by forgiving and encouraging him to keep going.

“Tough times often teach us more than the good ones,” Shawn said.

And so he likewise extends grace and forgiveness, and during the tough times, encourages his students to “Shake It Off.”

About the Extra Mile Award

Any individual may nominate a Bentonville Schools employee by going to our [website](#). Nominations will be considered by administration and that employee's direct supervisor. Nomination rules and regulations will be posted on the website prior to the start of the nomination process.