

# GMCS Celebrates National Johnson O'Malley Teacher of the Year, Region 2: Terriet Wilson of Chee Dodge Elementary

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[Schools](#) proudly announces that Terriet Wilson, a Diné Heritage Language Teacher at Chee Dodge Elementary, has been named the National Johnson O'Malley Teacher of the Year for Region 2, recognizing her exceptional leadership in Indigenous language preservation and

education.

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Mrs. Wilson represents the heart of our mission at GMCS, empowering students through cultural knowledge, language preservation, and academic excellence.”

*Mike Hyatt*

Yáát'ééh, my name is Terriet Wilson. I am from Salina Springs, Arizona, and originally from Rock Point, AZ. My clans are Kinyaa'aanii (Towering House Clan), born for the Tł'izilání (Many Goats Clan). My maternal grandfather's clan is the Bit'ahnii (Folded Arms People Clan), and my paternal grandfather's clan is the Dzilt'ahnii (Near the Mountain People Clan).

For more than a decade, Mrs. Wilson has been a cornerstone of Chee Dodge Elementary, teaching Diné

language and heritage with passion, purpose, and cultural integrity. She is recognized across the district for creating a classroom environment that honors Diné values while fostering academic growth, cultural identity, and confidence in her students.

Originally from Rock Point and now residing in Salina Springs, Mrs. Wilson brings her deep connection to Diné culture into every aspect of her instruction. Her lessons not only strengthen language skills but also reinforce community, tradition, and belonging.

Beyond her classroom, Mrs. Wilson serves as a mentor for Heritage Language and Culture (HLC) teachers, guiding new educators as they enter the field. She has played an essential role in developing and expanding the GMCS HLC curriculum for kindergarten through fifth grade, ensuring that students across the district benefit from meaningful, standards-aligned lessons rooted in culture.

Known for her meticulous preparation and unwavering dedication, Mrs. Wilson consistently designs lessons that meet district expectations while remaining culturally responsive. Her

teaching blends academic excellence with cultural grounding, nurturing students who are curious, confident, and strongly connected to their identity.

GMCS School Board Member Priscilla Benally expressed her pride in Wilson's accomplishments:

"I'm incredibly proud that we have such a distinguished and dedicated teacher within our district. It was also a special honor for me as her GMCS Board Member and the Region 2 (State of New Mexico) representative to present her with this national award."

Superintendent [Mike Hyatt](#) also shared praise:

"Mrs. Wilson represents the heart of our mission at GMCS, empowering students through cultural knowledge, language preservation, and academic excellence. Her leadership and mentorship have strengthened our Heritage Language and Culture program and continue to inspire both students and educators across the district."

Through her teaching, mentorship, and curriculum development, Terriet Wilson continues to make a profound and lasting impact—uplifting the next generation of Diné learners and preserving the language, traditions, and stories that form the foundation of their identity.

Jvanna Hanks  
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