

5 Minutes with the 2020 National Teacher of the Year

This podcast episode is 5 Minutes with the 2020 National Teacher of the Year, Tabatha Rosproy. Tabatha joined us to discuss her reflections during her year as arguably the most unique time to be the National Teacher of the Year. She shares her plans for the future and recommendations to our educators for 2021.

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Transcript of the podcast episode:

Gabrielle: Hello everyone and welcome to the Educating All Learners Alliance podcast and our ‘5 Minutes With’ series. My name is Gabrielle Oates and today we’re sharing 5 minutes with the 2020 National Teacher of the Year, Tabatha Rosproy. As a ten year veteran teacher, Tabatha teaches typically developing and special education preschoolers at Wynfield early learning center. Welcome Tabatha, how are you doing today?

Tabatha: Thank you! I’m doing well and safe and just as good as I can be right now.

Gabrielle: It’s so great to have you here. I know that it’s probably the most unique year to be named the National Teacher of the Year

Tabatha: Absolutely, I keep saying “if i get any bragging rights, this is it.”

Gabrielle: That’s so true! Well congrats on that. I would just love, in this 5 minutes, to hear a bit about, of course your experience in 2020 and hopefully give some advice to teachers looking forward to this year. How was it for you being the National Teacher of the Year?

Tabatha: You know, I never expected to be Kansas Teacher of the Year, and then the National Teacher of the Year. This has been, even through the pandemic, an extreme honor. One where I get to connect with legislators and stakeholders in education all over the country, and also just incredible, empowered, inspiring educators.

Gabrielle: In terms of your personal plans for this year, what can people maybe expect from you?

Tabatha: Well, right now my goal is to return to the classroom after my tenure as National Teacher of the Year is up. I have made so many connections with incredible organizations across the country and so I definitely still see myself doing some work with some of those organizations, specifically some of those that are highlighting early childhood education as well as social emotional education for kids of all ages. Those are two really big passion areas for me. But, to say that I am missing the classroom right now would be an understatement. I love this job and this honor, but man, the kids are my purpose. Being in the classroom is really my purpose. So I'm excited to get reconnected to that.

Gabrielle: So as you were working with various organizations and teachers throughout this past year, were there some key strategies or tools that you emphasized with people to use during remote and hybrid learning?

Tabatha: Absolutely. One of the biggest pieces of advice that I give to people is to engage the family. You know, in the spring time when we first moved to remote learning and really nobody knew what we were doing, I had to really shape my practices around family coaching. And I think those that serve learners with special needs really understand this too, because it might be difficult to get some of the participation that you might have gotten in the classroom setting from behind a screen. So this pandemic, while has been very hard on all of us, has really encouraged me to keep reinvesting in the families and empowering them to be able to deliver some of this content to their students and helping them with the boundaries and issues they might be having at home.

Gabrielle: Engaging the families is one of the key points that we've been touching on, and we're happy that some of our partners are emphasizing and creating resources for. So then kind of on that note, just to give people the sort of look ahead of what to focus on, what to aim for in 2021, do you have any particular recommendations?

Tabatha: My advice and my experience would be to just keep connecting with them any way you can. Any time you can see their face, anytime you can make a connection where they hear your voice or see your picture, that is going to be the most meaningful time that you invest. If you're engaging their families and you're keeping that connection, that learning is still happening. I know that 2021, when the clock rolled over at midnight on January 1st, it didn't change our situation, but what it did was give us some time to reflect on what worked in the past and what wasn't working anymore. So

keep thinking about those things, be the reflective practitioners that I know you are, and remember that we can do this. We can handle it and we can get through it.

Gabrielle: Thank you for that message. I think that gives a lot of hope for people this year. It's been an interesting start to our January to say the least, and so I think those are some good values that people can reiterate in their classrooms, and in their homes, looking forward to this year. To find our more information and to hear other podcast episodes, go to educatingalllearners.org, subscribe to Educating All Learners YouTube channel, and follow us on Twitter [@educateall_org](https://twitter.com/educateall_org). Until next time, this is the Educating All Learners Alliance podcast!