

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR

**Tricia
Stellmacher**

Inspired by the great teachers she had both in school and in her own family, Tricia Stellmacher always knew the classroom was where she belonged. A lifelong love of reading sparked her passion early on, and the idea of helping a child unlock the magic of learning to read felt like a calling she could not ignore.

Tricia has spent her entire career at the same elementary school, a true testament to her dedication and love for her school community. Today, she serves as a K-5 reading and math interventionist.

At the heart of her work is relationship building. Tricia believes students learn best when they feel safe, supported, and confident enough to take risks. Working closely with her learners, she celebrates every victory, helping students build momentum and belief in themselves. Tricia's motto, "You can do hard things," is more than a phrase. It is a message she works to instill in every student she teaches.

One of the most meaningful parts of her career comes long after her students leave. They regularly return to visit, and she has been honored to attend graduations and weddings over the years. Those moments, watching students grow into successful adults, are a powerful reminder of the lasting impact educators can have.

Tricia has earned a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction and completed her #316 Reading Teacher License. She continues learning through professional reading, teaching podcasts, and webinars, always seeking new ideas to better support her students.

Tricia draws daily motivation from her colleagues. The friendships formed over decades of teaching have become a vital support system, with shared tears and celebrations.

Personally, she is most proud of her two children. Professionally, nothing compares to the moment a student finally cracks the code and masters a new skill. Tricia views student success as when a child shifts from "I can't" to "I'll try," applies new learning independently, and carries that confidence back into the classroom.

Above all, Tricia hopes her students leave knowing they are capable, supported, and growing. Learning, she believes, is not about perfection, but progress. She wants every child to have the courage to keep trying and the confidence to dream big.

When she learned she was being recognized as an Outstanding Educator, she was shocked and deeply humbled. Surrounded by talented and dedicated colleagues throughout her career, she views teaching as a profession where learning never truly ends. As a life-long, proud Badger, the recognition felt especially meaningful and brought her career full circle.