

# Melissa Jade Pappas

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Winter Park, FL 32792 | Melissa.Pappas@ocps.net

## Professional Summary

Passionate, dedicated, and motivated teaching professional with demonstrated capabilities in addressing and meeting individual student needs and implementing developmentally appropriate practices. Committed to building rapport and fostering a positive learning environment for all students by utilizing a combined-skills approach and observing and respecting student feedback.

## Education

### **MASTER OF EDUCATION | AUGUST 2018 | UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA**

- Major: Exceptional Student Education
- Inducted as a member of Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society with a 4.0 GPA
- Selected as a member of the Project ASD Federal Grant Program
- Related coursework: Autism Spectrum Disorders Graduate Certificate, completed June 2017

### **BACHELOR OF ARTS | MAY 2015 | UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA**

- Major: Exceptional Student Education K-12/Elementary Education K-6
- Related coursework: ESOL Certification/Reading Endorsement

## Awards & Recognition

- Selected as the 2020 Orange County Public Schools District Teacher of the Year
- Recipient of the 2019 Mary J. Brogan Excellence in Teaching Award from the FLDOE
- Recognized by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis at the 2020 State of the State Address
- Selected as a State and District conference speaker and presenter
- Invited to serve on the Impact Florida Education Summit Teacher of the Year Team
- Graduate of the Florida LEAD Network Teacher Mentoring Program

## Skills & Abilities

### **LEADERSHIP**

- Responsible for coordinating a team of paraprofessionals and program assistants to best serve the needs of a diverse population of students within the classroom environment
- Takes initiative across many areas such as: learning and implementing individual education plans and behavior intervention plans; continuing education and seeking opportunities for personal and professional growth; creating, organizing, and carrying out team/schoolwide events
- Plays an active role as an ally and advocate to the ASD and special needs community both in and out of the school environment
- Served as Team Leader, 2018-2019 School Year
- Serves as a clinical educator/mentor for new/developing professionals

### **COMMUNICATION**

- Collaborates regularly with service providers, parents, ESE team members, and administration to maintain a positive, effective learning environment and best meet the changing needs of students
- Open to discussing and implementing new ideas and strategies
- Builds positive relationships with school team and parents of students

## **INNOVATION**

- Finds opportunities to engage students based off their ability levels and levels of interest
- Creates original materials and lessons to teach students in creative and effective ways
- Constantly evaluates classroom procedures and lessons from various perspectives to provide a variety of learning approaches for students

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

- Completes tasks in a thorough but timely manner, including individual education plans, communications with service providers, ESE team members, parents, or administration
- Maintains an organized environment to minimize downtime and avoid distraction that may cause behavior escalation in students
- Informs support staff of important information or changes in a timely manner to ensure consistency

## **Experience**

### **TEACHER, SELF-CONTAINED ASD K-5 | OCPS-LAKEMONT ELEMENTARY | 08/2021 TO CURRENT**

- Responsible for: teaching up to 12 students instructed in Access Points and Florida Standards curriculum in a self-contained setting; administering the Florida Standards Assessment/Florida Standards Alternate Assessment to 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students; writing and implementing Individual Education Plans; collaborating on and implementing Individual Behavior Intervention Plans; developing individualized classroom structure and schedules to meet the various needs of lower-functioning students with intensive behavioral needs; instructing students with communication needs, including use of Assistive Technology (AT) devices and Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC); coordinating daily with support staff, service providers, and the ESE team to create a strong, positive classroom environment to encourage student growth and learning; tending to student medical needs and collaborating with the school nurse to ensure safety and wellbeing; provides trainings and materials to peers on various subject matter, including autism and special needs; creates schoolwide initiatives to foster community within the school setting; completes mandatory and optional trainings in accordance with district policies

### **TEACHER, VE RESOURCE K-5 | OCPS-LAKEMONT ELEMENTARY | 08/2020 TO 5/2021**

- Responsible for: providing pull-out and support facilitation ESE services for K-5 students in the areas of curriculum and learning, independent functioning, and social/emotional behavior in both face-to-face and virtual settings; scheduling and coordinating groups; developing and writing IEPs; data acquisition; differentiating instruction based on individual needs and services; facilitating IEP meetings with the staffing specialist; communicating regularly with teachers and families; providing testing accommodations for district and state assessments

### **TEACHER, INTENSIVE ASD K-5 | OCPS-BROOKSHIRE ELEMENTARY | 08/2015 TO 6/2020**

- Responsible for: teaching up to 6 students instructed in Access Points and Florida Standards curriculum in a self-contained setting; administering the Florida Standards Assessment/Florida Standards Alternate Assessment to 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students; writing and implementing Individual Education Plans; collaborating on and implementing Individual Behavior Intervention Plans; developing individualized classroom structure and schedules to meet the various needs of lower-functioning students with intensive behavioral needs; instructing students with communication needs, including use of Assistive Technology (AT) devices and Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC); coordinating daily with support staff, service providers, and the ESE team to create a strong, positive classroom environment to encourage student growth and learning; tending to student medical needs and collaborating with the school nurse to ensure safety and wellbeing; provides trainings and materials to peers on various subject matter, including autism and special

needs; creates schoolwide initiatives to foster community within the school setting; completes mandatory and optional trainings in accordance with district policies

**PARAPROFESSIONAL, SEVERELY HANDICAPPED | OCPS-BROOKSHIRE ELEMENTARY | 8/2012 TO 6/2015**

- Responsible for: working one-on-one with a student with autism in the general education setting; thoroughly understanding and implementing student's Individual Education Plan and Individual Behavior Intervention Plan; collaborating with classroom teachers, parents, and ESE staff to ensure student success; organizing and producing daily tools and supplies to be used by students; providing support to ESE classrooms

**OFFICE CLERK | OCPS-BROOKSHIRE ELEMENTARY | 8/2010 TO 8/2012**

- Responsible for: organization and presentation of school front office; interacting daily with parents, students, employees, and guests; assisting peers by taking on additional tasks; responsible for completing clerical tasks, clinic supervision, and supervising groups of students

**CERTIFIED PRESCHOOL TEACHER | WINTER PARK DAY NURSERY | 2/2007 TO 11/2009**

- Responsible for: teaching groups of up to 18 2-4 year old students; working collaboratively with up to two co-teachers to create developmentally appropriate and differentiated lesson plans and activities; administering, interpreting, and applying preschool developmental assessments schoolwide; working individually with students with behavioral challenges; collaborating constructively with families