What makes a good teacher?

We asked experienced teachers what they think makes a good teacher. Here are some of their answers:

*Good teachers establish a sense of community.*

The relationship . . . with the class, the students, and the extended family of the classroom . . . parents, other staff, even custodial or secretarial staff can help develop a good teacher. A good teacher is a community builder.

*Good teachers get involved outside the classroom.*

I get involved with student activities, and their day to day lives. I go to their hockey games and their piano concerts and I sit with my husband and cheer.

*Good teachers believe in their students, and respect and understand them.*

Good teachers see students as individuals; they let them know they believe in them. Anyone can deliver curriculum but to connect with the kids, that’s a totally different thing. If you have that connection, you can teach them anything.

*Good teachers have an intuitive sense.*

An intuitive sense about children and young people. They can read them and understand who they are and where they’re coming from and how they’re feeling.

*Good teachers share themselves.*

They are people who have life experiences, something to share, stories. . . . In my classroom every morning, there’s a story. I add my gifts to the curriculum . . . and call for the giftedness of my students.

*Good teachers take risks.*

They are extremely brave and . . . a little crazy, . . . willing to try anything, do anything, be anything.

*Good teachers are passionate:*

Good teachers are passionate about . . . education, teachers, their students . . . . Look out at the kids and you know that you have to do the job . . . it’s passion for the job and the kids that keeps you going.

*They share their joy.*

I feel I do a good job—because I love it. I love to come in. I need to be here. I want to be here. I love my kids. So . . . it’s just joyous.

*They are compassionate.*

Every person who stands in front of me is someone’s child and so compassion is huge. Compassion allows you to see beyond what other people see in kids. A student may have a reputation but they know when they come into your room, they’re safe. I remember someone caring about me and asking about me and knowing that I like tropical fish and all those details about my life. They cared enough to ask me about those details.