

# Kelly Ronson



Kelly is a compassionate, passionate and devoted 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher for the Baltimore County Public Schools System. She looks at learning in a unique way, giving each child the opportunity to choose what works best for them in the classroom. MPT reached out to Kelly to capture some of the magic and motivation behind her teaching.

## Lifelong Learning

Kelly takes a refreshing approach to learning and teaching! She goes above and beyond for each child, and finds innovative ways to include parents and caregivers in their children's education. She shares a little more about her approach with MPT.

*"I am very passionate about motivating my students to be lifelong learners. I model lifelong learning by continuing my own education. I am currently working towards a Ph.D. in education. I enjoy sharing my school experiences with my students so they see that even teachers still have a lot to learn!"*

By encouraging and allowing her students to provide feedback about lessons, she is helping shape their future which creates meaningful and memorable learning. Kelly makes a point to really get to know all of her students on a personal level and hosts "lunch bunches" in the classroom where she can listen to each child, have open discussions, and get to know them as children and not just as students. In her caring and open communication style, she lets the children know that *"the only rule at lunch bunch is "No school talk!"* Her goal each day is to provide a relaxed atmosphere where students feel encouraged to take risks, rally around each other when they face shortcomings, and celebrate each other's success.

## Meeting Students Needs

Focusing on the individual strengths, interests and abilities of each child, Ms. Ronson meets children where they are, providing a nurturing platform where everyone can succeed. An inspiring statement from Kelly let us deeper into the mind of this remarkable educator.

*"Over the years I have become increasingly aware of my responsibility to conform to my students' needs and not the other way around."*

## Choices and Empowerment

Ms. Ronson's students know that there is not just one way to learn or interact in the classroom and with each other, but many. Always approachable and responsive, she creates an atmosphere of inspiration, creativity and comfort, providing a learning environment where possibilities are endless. She lets her students know that in her classroom, they have a choice.

*"Students often choose how they want to demonstrate what they have learned. Assessments are no longer only a worksheet handed out at the end of a lesson. Students give presentations, make models, and engage in group discussions to demonstrate mastery of new skills."*

In her classroom, students get to choose what type of learning space makes them most comfortable. During a typical reading lesson, they have a say in what feels right for them. Some students will choose

to work at their desk on a chair, some will type at the computer while simultaneously wiggling on a yoga ball, and others may write at a stand-up desk. Ms. Ronson shares with MPT that *“the importance of all the various work stations is that I want to empower every one of my students to discover how they work best.”* Fidgets are also available to students that are looking for a way to keep their fingers busy, minds focused, and bodies relaxed.

## Finding a Voice

Ms. Ronson encourages her students to find their voice and use it. She prides herself in seeking feedback from her students and using that feedback to guide her instruction. This allows students to take an active role in their own education. *“Students know that in their classroom we are all students and we are all teachers”* says Ronson. It is not lost on us at MPT that Kelly refers to “her” classroom as “their” classroom, another reminder that this is a collaborative and supportive learning place where individual voices and children’s choices matter.

## Parent Engagement

Kelly also makes sure that parents are a key part of their children’s learning experience.

*“I often send pictures to parents/caregivers showing what we are doing in the classroom. The pictures are a great way to make a school- home connection. The pictures help guide discussions at home and can help avoid the often typical conversation.”* Here is an example:

Parent/Caregiver: “What did you do in school today?”

Child: “Nothing”

Result: With photos, parents/caregivers can hold their children accountable for their learning.

## Parents Perspective

MPT’s education team reached out to a few of the parents with children in Mr. Ronson’s class, and this is what they had to say!

*Mrs. Ronson sees every student as an individual, with unique talents and needs. She has created an atmosphere that is safe and nurturing which frees students to grow beyond expectations. Will is thriving in her classroom. I'm able to talk to my son about what he is doing each day in class because of Mrs. Ronson's excellent parent communication. Her (almost) daily updates with photos give me a window into the classroom. Her love of learning is contagious. Mrs. Ronson initiated a Passion Project in which students conduct research on a topic of their own interest. My son saved his sister's hermit crab with his research.*

- Jennifer Pleszkoch

*Mrs. Ronson creates an environment that fosters confidence, one in which children feel capable and free to contribute in a true community of learners.*

- Victoria Shields