

Application: 0000000089

Tiffany Pfeifer [REDACTED]
2024-2025 New Teacher of the Year Application

Summary

ID: 0000000089
Last submitted: Jan 26 2024 02:53 PM (CST)

Applicant Information

Completed - Jan 24 2024

Form for "Applicant Information"

This is my form.

Applicant Name

Tiffany Pfeifer

Applicant School Name

Washington Marion High School

Applicant School System

Calcasieu Parish

Grade(s) Taught

9-11

Subject(s) Taught

Geometry

Certification Type/Number

[REDACTED]

Applicant Email Address

[REDACTED]

Applicant Phone Number

[REDACTED]

Bio: Add your professional bio in the textbox below. Please follow the guidelines outlined below. (250 words or less) Please complete your professional biography in 3rd person, as it would appear in print. In your bio, please include the following items: 1. The grade level and subject you currently teach (TOYs) or the grades at your school (POYs) 2. The name of your school, including city and state 3. Degrees you hold include the institution where they were received (i.e., Bachelor of Science in Education from the Louisiana State University) In your bio, please follow the following style guidelines: 1. Spell out your degrees (i.e., Bachelor of Art not BA) 2. Only capitalize a subject area when it's a language (i.e., capitalize English but not calculus) 3. Use your first and last name in the first reference, but your last name only on second and subsequent references 4. Spell out all acronyms the first time they are used

Tiffany Pfeifer is a high school geometry teacher at Washington Marion High School. Born and raised in Kansas, Pfeifer graduated last spring from Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education and a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics. Three days before the school year began, Pfeifer packed her belongings and headed south to Lake Charles, Louisiana to start her teaching career. Her students have been quick to show her the Louisiana way of living, sharing all the best restaurants, explaining which college teams to support, and translating their southern lingo.

Original Social Media Quote: Add an original social media quote (that could be used in print) in the textbox below that captures the essence of you as an educator. (280 character limit)

The world is full of problems to be solved. In each case we must determine what is known and what is to be discovered. The ability to make the connection between the two defines a mathematician.

Reflection Questions

Completed - Jan 26 2024

Form for "Reflection Questions"

This is my form.

Reflection Question 1 Add your response to the following prompt in the textbox below. Note- You may also submit supplemental materials to accompany your response in the last step in this application portal. (Documents may be in any format, such as a chart, news article, video, photos, etc.)

Why did you decide to become an educator? What impact have you had on students in your first few months in the classroom? In your response, provide specific examples of how you currently and will continue to meet Louisiana's educational priorities: (You may write about one or more priorities.)

- Ensure every student is on track to a professional career, college degree, or service
- Remove barriers and create equitable, inclusive learning experiences for all children
- Provide the highest quality teaching and learning environment
- Cultivate high-impact systems, structures, and partnerships
- Develop and retain a diverse, highly effective educator workforce (750 words or less)

My passion for education began with a general interest in serving high school-aged youth. In my own experience, my four years proved to be profoundly influential in shaping my identity and values. A pivotal moment occurred during my senior year of high school when I took on a role mentoring a group of freshmen girls. I saw so much of my story in their lives, which sparked a desire to dedicate my life to bringing love and joy into a phase of life where teenagers often grapple with feeling of loneliness and neglect. Upon embarking on my education journey in college, I delved deep into the intricacies of the school system, uncovering the factors that contribute to students' distorted perceptions of learning. Our cultural norms traditionally confined the concept of learning to the physical boundaries of a school building. This mindset gave a predetermined beginning and end to learning that began on the first day of kindergarten and concluded on graduation day. Students eagerly anticipated freedom from the rigor of school, which often extended to a broader desire to cease learning all together. However, this mindset proves inadequate when students transition into their careers. Recognizing the shortcoming of this approach, I became passionate about entering the school system to foster a true love of learning in my students. From the start of the school year, I have striven to break down the barriers that prevent students from seeing the vitality of learning in every facet of their life. This commitment fueled my aspiration to cultivate more than just a mind full of mathematical concepts but rather a true mathematical mind. Teaching math in a Title I school comes with its own set of challenges. Most of my students do not envision a career path that heavily utilizes math, so I reconstructed my classroom to equip them for life beyond the classroom instead of merely their next math course. In my math experience, I was taught through example questions and sent home to complete problems identical to my notes, which required little thinking. Instead, I assign work that extends students' knowledge to application problems. For instance, one day I provided students with a definition of a median and then instructed them to draw one on their own. In this type of problem, students were forced to apply the definition and recall a previous lesson on the midpoint formula. By placing an emphasis on critical thinking, I am sending students into the world who are capable and confident in stepping into an unknown situation and working till they discover a logical answer. In my classroom, students rarely learn mathematical concepts through my direct instruction. Instead, students are encouraged to explore new material by discovering patterns and making connections to their previous knowledge.

For example, instead of simply listing off the different triangle congruency theorems, I partnered students up with a peer and had them construct triangles with various side and angle measurements. Students visually saw which triangles always matched their partner and deduced the congruence theorems from their observations. The emphasis is on developing problem-solving techniques that will aid them in reaching independent success without teacher supervision. My students are practicing the art of productive struggle, increasing their perseverance. They are sharing ideas amongst each other and disputing which answer follows mathematical truths. When presented with a task too big for them to comprehend, they break the problem down until they can make sense of the smaller pieces. These skills extend beyond forming strong Geometry students to nurturing individuals with unwavering determination and exceptional character. These attributes adequately prepare any student for success in every career path. Every day I encourage their learning by creating an engaging experience. I teach with a joy and excitement that spreads to my students. By creating this interactive experience, students come to understand that they are an active member in the classroom. I know I have pushed them out of their comfort zone, but they have willingly accepted the challenge and worked hard to reach my rigorous expectations. My role is to guide and support their learning, filling in the holes as necessary. Their success is ultimately a result of their hard work, and I am so proud of them and all the progress they have made.

Reflection Question 2 Add your response to the following prompt in the textbox below. You may also submit supplemental materials to accompany your response in the last step in this application portal. (Documents may be in any format, such as a chart, news article, video, photos, etc.)

There are many challenges to attracting students to pursue a career in education. How did your expectations of teaching align to the realities of teaching? What would you say to young people about why pursuing a career in education is a good choice? (750 words or less)

The maxim "If they know you care, they will do anything for you," was the piece of advice that echoed consistently as I prepared for my teaching career, and its truth became apparent in my first year of teaching. Entering my first year, I was promised the hardest year of my career. I walked into my first day of school with a list of insecurities and fears about my age, experience, intellectual abilities, and everything in between. But, to my surprise, I discovered students were only concerned with the depth to which I cared. From the start of the school year, I have prioritized showing each student I am in their corner. Understanding each student excels in different areas, I remain aware of their interests and attend their events whenever possible. I need the students to understand that I believe in them so they will trust me. At one of my student's games, I sat in the bleachers with a handful of fans and overheard one of my student's teammates ask her if her mom was coming to the volleyball game. With a smile on her face, she looked and pointed to me in the stands and said, "No, but Ms. Pfeifer is here." My students just need someone to show up for them. So, every day I have shown up for my students, and it is amazing to see how my best days correspond to my students' best days. Teaching with the love of my students in the forefront of my head allows me to positively enter the school day after day. While academic rigor holds a high priority in my classroom, I have come to realize that prioritizing my love of my students over stringent expectations results in a more rewarding teaching experience for me and a more impactful learning experience for my students. Truthfully, I find more joy in my career than I thought I would, but that is also amidst more obstacles than I could have ever imagined. Based on all the warnings I received, I prepared for this year to be the hardest of my career, but it is challenging in a way I did not expect. This profession has deepened my humility, forcing me to reflect on ways to improve continually. My mind races with ideas to accommodate diverse students while keeping the material engaging and productive. Striking a balance between holding students accountable and offering grace during challenging times remains an ongoing challenge. The career is difficult because I know that I cannot sacrifice what is best for my students to make my life easier. Choosing a career in education means accepting a role teaching, serving, and loving students. When I put aside how I felt at the end of the day and prioritized how my students felt after leaving my class, I began to see the rewarding side of the profession. My favorite time of the day is before the first bell rings to start school. My classroom is the last room at the end of the hall, and every morning I have students from all seven of my classes flock to my door with good morning hugs and stories from all the previous day's activities. Creating those relationships is what initially drew me to teaching, and it continues to be the reason I return every day. When you love your students, they return the same love back. I believe any person who desires to instill belief into young people belongs in the education system. As a teacher your primary role is to unlock the potential of your students.

You are your students' biggest cheerleader in the classroom, and it is your responsibility to foster their confidence and grow their capabilities. Your interactions with your students always matter more than any material you could teach. So, to anyone considering a career as an educator, be honest with your motivations for choosing this workforce. My desire to reestablish an appreciation for learning and a passion for math were driving forces that got me into the classroom, but not every student shares those same values. Yet, every day, my students know they are coming to a class with a teacher who loves them and pushes them to their best. In return, I receive 123 of my favorite people, making it easy to return each day.

Reflection Question 3 Add your response to the following prompt in the textbox below. You may also submit supplemental materials to accompany your response in the last step in this application portal. (Documents may be in any format, such as a chart, news article, video, photos, etc.)

How do you ensure that you are continuously growing as an educator? Where do you want to be professionally in five years? Ten years? (750 words or less)

I love the irony of watching my fellow teachers during an in-service day. It is now our turn to sit in the chairs of our students, and the challenge asked of us is the same I offer my students every day: Will you use this opportunity as a to expand your thinking? Even though professional development is regularly scheduled within our school year, attendance at these sessions does not guarantee professional growth. Learning demands engagement. True growth occurs when I translate the information I receive into the context of my classroom. Each idea must be tested against logistics and challenged by every possible obstacle. With my values and priorities in the forefront of my mind, I carefully decipher which teaching tactics align with my classroom vision. I must decide how the teaching methods shared with me will be an asset to my students' learning experience. I consistently search for learning opportunities that discuss innovative techniques for building thinking classrooms. Attending these events provides me with the opportunity to discuss and process the realities of transforming the educational system. These lectures facilitate discussions that provoke thought and stimulate meaningful conversations. Speaking with educators who share a teaching philosophy similar to my own, we bridge the gap between theory and practice, tailoring our new knowledge to accommodate our unique classrooms. To pass on a love of learning, I must model it for my students. Even as an experienced educator, I want to illustrate to my students that I value learning as a lifelong process. Educational transformations are happening across the world. When I step out of my classroom and begin to have conversations with others, I realize that I am far from alone in fighting the battle. Observing the strengths and successes of other educators reveals the areas where I can expand my mindset and revitalize my teaching approach. On this educational journey I am committed to evolving as an educator and contributing to the dialogue that is redefining education. In five years, I will stand in front of my students as a better teacher than I am today. My commitment to working with the high-risk population will fuel the continued development of my inquiry-based classroom, aiming to better address the needs of this demographic. Creating a classroom built on exploration and application, I will spark student interest and deepen comprehension. As I accumulate more experience, my patience will increase, concealing any trace of frustration that the school day may bring. Most importantly, every day my students will know I love them and want them to succeed. In five years, I will be better than I am today, but I will still be growing. Envisioning life in ten years, my aspirations extend beyond the confines of the classroom as I strive to develop a meaningful influence within the school. I want to inspire my coworkers to transform their classroom and dream of a different education system alongside me. With years of experience now behind me, I hope to serve as the head of the math department. In collaboration with my fellow educators, I aim to establish a cohesive math program from Algebra to Calculus. Under this structure, the focus in the math classroom will shift towards equipping students with the skills to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. While mastery

of the Louisiana State Standards remains a top priority, the ultimate goal is to create confident, critical thinkers who are capable of resolving any problem thrown their direction. Even a decade from now, I can anticipate difficult days and teaching mistakes, but I can also envision a teacher with greater confidence and better preparation. For this reason, I will continue to pursue any opportunity to grow as an educator. Every day I will learn alongside my students, and as they change and grow, so will I. We are lifelong learners, and together we will transform the educational world.

Teaching Video and Lesson Plan

Completed - Jan 25 2024

Form for "Teaching Video and Lesson Plan"

Teaching Video/Lesson Plan

TEACHING VIDEO/LESSON PLAN: Add the YouTube video URL in the textbox below. Upload a copy of your lesson plan with your application in the last step in this application portal.

<https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FdJvuAFRnrwY&data=05%7C02%7Ctiffany.pfeifer%40cpsb.org%7C3771de4168674bf353d008dc1e0153d2%7Ce948d2debf74b08859d6caf2b9a3ca7%7C0%7C0%7C638418238258623850%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikk1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C&sdata=mDCHKqTwDNjEjs7Srkl2rKCy1ls5pJwiwZz5mBOYbil%3D&reserved=0>

Signatures/Approval

Completed - Jan 23 2024

Form for "Signatures/Approval"

This is my form.

Principal/School Leader Name

Ms. Crystal Bowie

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

William Pfeifer

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Tiffany Pfeifer

HIGH SCHOOL MATH TEACHER



STRENGTHS

- * Building personalized relationship with each student
- * Designing innovative lessons that increase student interest and motivation
- * Activating prior knowledge that builds into new skills
- * Creating exploratory exercises that allow students to recognize patterns
- * Fostering an environment with productive struggle and critical thinking

EMPLOYMENT

Washington Marion High School, Lake Charles, LA August 2023 - Present
Geometry and Advanced Geometry Teacher

- * Creating and implementing lesson plans that align to Louisiana State Standards
- * Collaborating with the math department to increase coherency between subject levels
- * Communicating with resource teachers to fulfill student accommodations
- * Developing interactive lessons to increase student motivation and comprehension
- * Analyzing formative assessments to gauge student progress and appropriately respond to students' needs at various skill levels

CAREER RELATED EXPERIENCE

Noyce Scholarship Program, Scholar 2020-Present

- * Attend annual Noyce Summit for professional development
- * Connect and network with math teachers nationwide
- * Research innovative techniques for mathematical education

Student Teaching, Intern 2023

- * Designed and delivered an Algebra unit on polynomials and factoring
- * Created assignments focused on student exploration and self-motivation
- * Developed lessons that built on students' previous knowledge

UFM Teen Mentoring Program, Program Coordinator 2019-2022

- * Created lessons oriented towards high-risk populations
- * Facilitated student-led discussions and activities
- * Connected with community for student referrals and grant information

COMMITTEES

Behavioral RTI Team, Washington-Marion 2023-Present

Calendar Committee, Calcasieu Parish 2023-Present

EDUCATION

Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS May 2023
Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education
Bachelor of Science in Mathematics

Melissa Miller

Assistant Principal

Washington Marion High School

2802 Pineview Street, Lake Charles, La. 70615

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

January 18, 2024

Dear Louisiana's New Teacher of the Year Committee,

I am writing this letter to highly recommend Tiffany Pfeifer for the position of Louisiana New Teacher of the Year. I have had the pleasure of working with Ms. Pfeifer for the past year here at Washington Marion High School, where she has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication, passion, and skill in her role as a teacher.

Ms. Pfeifer is an outstanding educator who goes above and beyond to ensure the success and growth of her students. Her ability to create a positive and inclusive learning environment is truly remarkable. Students want to go to her class! She fosters a sense of belonging and encourages her students to reach their full potential. Ms. Pfeifer's teaching methods are innovative and engaging, making learning enjoyable for her students.

One of her greatest strengths is her ability to connect with her students on a personal level. I enjoy watching her building those positive relationships and racing her students to the classroom! She takes the time to understand their individual needs, strengths, and challenges, and tailors her instruction accordingly. Ms. Pfeifer's patience, empathy, and genuine care for her students have made a significant impact on their academic and personal development.

In addition to her exceptional teaching skills, Tiffany is also a dedicated team player. She actively collaborates with her colleagues. She has stepped up and led Math PLCs even though she is the new kid on the block. She is a member of the Behavioral RTI team and consistently provides meaningful feedback and ideas to promote positive student behavior. Her willingness to support other teachers has greatly contributed to the overall success of our school community.

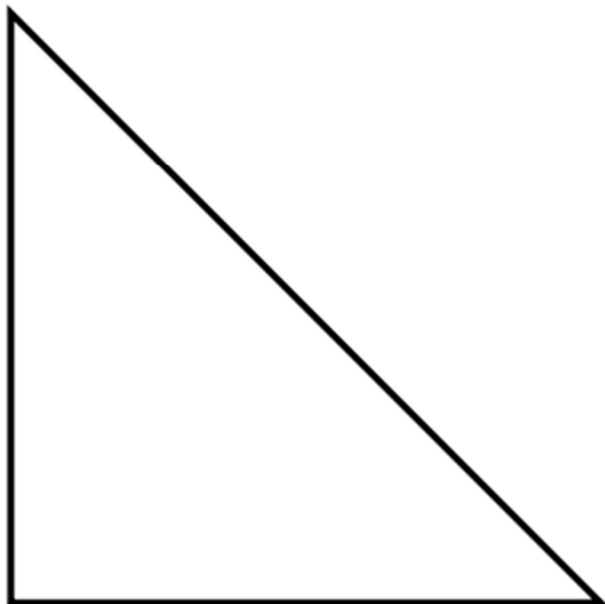
Ms. Pfeifer's commitment to professional growth is evident in her continuous pursuit of learning and improvement. I have no doubt that she would be an exceptional choice for the Louisiana New Teacher of the Year. Her passion for teaching, her ability to inspire and motivate students, and her commitment to excellence make her a truly deserving candidate. I wholeheartedly recommend Ms. Tiffany Pfeifer for this prestigious recognition. Should you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for considering Ms. Pfeifer's candidacy for the Louisiana New Teacher of the Teacher of Year award.

Sincerely,

Melissa Miller

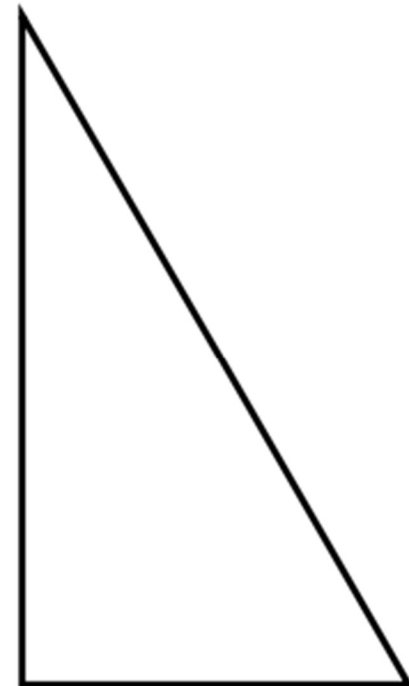
Special Right Triangle

Angle Measures		
Side Measures		



Special Right Triangle

Angle Measures		
Side Measures		



Washington-Marion High School



2802 Pineview Street

Lake Charles, Louisiana 70615

Phone: (337) 217-4540 Fax: (337) 217-4541

Crystal M. Bowie, Principal

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to wholeheartedly recommend Ms. Tiffany Pfeifer for the LDOE New Teacher of the Year Award. Having observed Ms. Pfeifer's dedication and impact during her first year at Washington Marion, I am confident in her deserving this recognition.

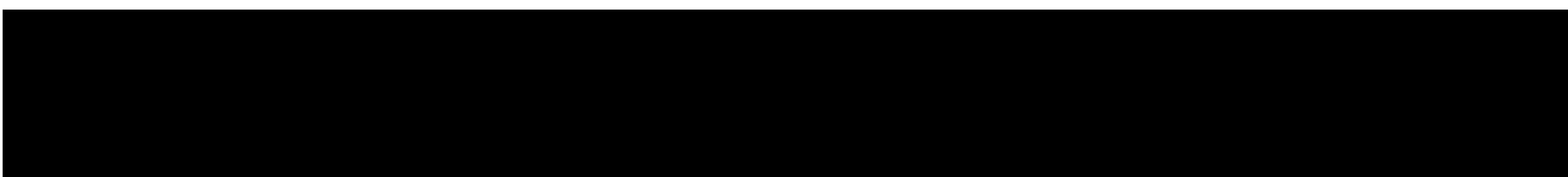
Ms. Pfeifer's enthusiasm for teaching is evident in her role as a Geometry teacher and LEAP 2025 instructor. Not only is working diligently everyday to ensure that our students meet the state's graduation requirements, but she also fosters a motivational atmosphere in her classroom. Her commitment extends beyond academic excellence, as she actively engages with school community through volunteering and participation in the RTI Behavior Committee.

Having recently relocated from Kansas, Ms. Pfeifer has embraced the Louisiana way of life with remarkable adaptability. Her creative and hands-on teaching approach has resonated well with her students, making the learning experience both enjoyable and effective. Her selection as Calcasieu Parish's High School New Teacher of the Year is a testament to her exceptional contributions.

Ms. Pfeifer's dedication, innovative teaching methods, and positive impact on students make her an outstanding candidate for this prestigious award. I wholeheartedly endorse her nomination and believe she embodies the tenets of an exemplary teacher.

Sincerely,

Crystal M. Bowie, Principal



Unit Number/Title: Activity 21: Special Right Triangles		Number of Instructional Days	1
Activity-Lesson/Title of the Lesson: 21-2: 30-60-90 Triangles			
Standard(s)	<p>GM: G-SRT.C.6 Understand that by similarity, side ratios in right triangles, including special right triangles (30-60- 90 and 45-45-90), are properties of the angles in the triangle, leading to definitions of trigonometric ratios for acute angles.</p> <p>GM: G-SRT.C.8 Use trigonometric ratios and the Pythagorean Theorem to solve right triangles in applied problems.</p>		
Mathematical Practice(s)	<p>4 – Model with mathematics.</p> <p>8 – Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning</p>		
Objective(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be able to discover relationships in 30-60-90 triangles using Pythagorean Theorem. • Students will be able to summarize their findings into the rules for special triangles. 		
Bellringer(s)	<p>Review of 45-45-90 degree triangle discoveries with two practice questions. Remind students of the connection between their findings and the Pythagorean Theorem.</p>		
Material(s)	<p>Paper, pencil, calculator</p>		
TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES Applications/ Technology Tools	<p>Geometry Coursework Unit 9 Lesson 7 - Math Nation (algebration.com) Springboard - Lesson 21-2: 30°-60°-90° Triangles (springboardonline.org) Pear Assessment: Formative and Summative Assessments Made Easy (edulastic.com)</p>		
Outline of Instruction	<p>Bellringer (6 minutes) Discovery (30 minutes) Summary (10 minutes)</p>		
Assignment(s)	<p>Part 2 of Special Triangle Practice</p>		
Exit Ticket(s)	<p>30-60-90 Special Triangle Rule Summary (See Attached)</p>		
Summative Assessment(s)	<p>Chapter 10 Test</p>		
RTI Resource(s)	<p>Math Nation</p>		
Reflection Note(s)	<p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p>		