



## Stacy Culbreath Shepherd

Durant Public Schools

■ **FINALIST** | 2010 Oklahoma  
Teacher of the Year

*“As a Choctaw tribal member, I understand the desperate need to preserve a dying portion of our identity. The teaching of the Choctaw language to young students is the first step in saving our culture.”*

### Where?

Stacy Culbreath Shepherd teaches English and Choctaw language at Durant High School.

### How Long?

Has been in her current position for 14 years, with a total of 29 years as an educator and previous employment at Colbert Public Schools.

### Why Education?

Comes from a pioneering family that includes Indian Territory's first Native American judge and the executive director of education for the Choctaw Nation. Becoming a teacher was a natural fit for one raised by lovers of learning. In her family, “education equals opportunity” and there is no higher calling than bringing opportunity to others.

### Her Philosophy?

Being innovative and not afraid of getting out of their comfort zones are traits of effective teachers. Educators must define and redefine their role in education as change occurs. As “times change, students change, and teachers must follow suit.” A test she constantly gives herself to evaluate her methods is simply to ask herself: “Would I be bored?”

### Her Education?

Bachelor's of English/elementary education and Master of Education in school administration from Southeastern State University.

### If Selected?

Would advocate that teachers be better trained to understand the culture of poverty and what it brings to the classroom. The “scourge of poverty” goes beyond any political or economic answers, she believes, but is at the very core of why too many students do not succeed.



## Leadership2009

State Superintendent's Annual Leadership Conference

Sandy Garrett, State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Oklahoma State Department of Education