



# 2020 Indiana Teacher of the Year Nominees

# Kelly Anthony, Crown Point Community School Corporation

Ms. Anthony is a first grade teacher at Lake Street Elementary School in Crown Point. Her main priorities are getting to know her students on a deeper level and finding what works to motivate them in the classroom. She is a co-Spell Bowl coach, tutor, literacy coach, team leader, and serves on more than 10 different other committees within her school and corporation. When she is not teaching she can be found reading, planning activities and outings for her family, skiing, camping, travelling, working in the yard, and enjoying all of the positive people in her life.



B.S. – Purdue University  
M.Ed. – Indiana Wesleyan University



# Christine Austin, Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation

Ms. Austin is a fourth grade teacher at Walt Disney Elementary School where she fosters an accepting atmosphere with high expectations and accountability. She believes the students in her Title I school thrive in a responsive classroom where they are taught as the leaders they will become. Ms. Austin implements guided reading and math techniques to impact student learning, behavior, engagement, and metacognition. Her students' growth data consistently outperforms state expectancies. Outside of the classroom, Ms. Austin serves as Spell Bowl coach, sponsor for After School Learning Clubs, Girls on the Run coach, and group leader for the Young Authors' Conference.



B.S. – Indiana University



# Nancy Bailey, Franklin Community Schools

Ms. Bailey has passionately taught Spanish for more than 30 years. She dedicates herself to helping her students attain an appreciation for other cultures and challenges them to communicate in the target language at the highest possible level. She ensures student engagement as she enthusiastically shares her love of the Spanish language. Ms. Bailey builds relationships and encourages her students to remain tenacious in their efforts to speak another language. She reminds her students that diligence is key and communication is the goal.



B.A. – Goshen College  
M.Ed. – Indiana Wesleyan University



# Jacob Bowman, Western School Corporation

Mr. Bowman currently teaches physics at Western High School in Russiaville, Indiana. He has taught in Western School Corporation since 2017. While at Western, Mr. Bowman has taught Integrated Chemistry and Physics, Chemistry, Physics, Honors Physics, AP Physics 1 and AP Physics 2 courses in addition to tutoring students in calculus-based physics. He has generated tremendous growth in physics enrollment at Western, nearly tripling the number of students taking physics courses after his first year of teaching while also adding a two-year AP Physics program to Western's course offerings. Mr. Bowman is originally from Michigan City and was a 2017 graduate of Valparaiso University, and now resides in Kokomo.



B.S. – Valparaiso University



# Nicole Brown, School City of Mishawaka

Ms. Brown received a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Saint Mary's College and earned her Master's Degree in Education at Bethel University. She is a kindergarten teacher at Beiger Elementary where she is a member of her schools Partners in Technology Leadership Team and works as a clinical educator to aide students in developing effective teacher practices. Ms. Brown is passionate about implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) into daily lessons. Ms. Brown and her professional learning committee team wrote a large grant to support SEL on the playground. She believes students should have an education in which they can take they knowledge they gained in the classroom and apply it to real life situations.



B.A. – St. Mary's College  
M.Ed. – Bethel University



# Nicole Buss, John Glenn School Corporation

Ms. Buss is a First Grade Teacher at North Liberty Elementary School in the John Glenn School Corporation. She has taught for 17 years. Ms. Buss is an innovative, enthusiastic, and highly effective educator with an unending commitment to academic growth and student relationships. In addition to setting high expectations for herself and her students, Ms. Buss is constantly seeking, researching, and implementing new practices and strategies in the classroom which results in above proficient academics. Ms. Buss is a sincerely passionate educator devoted to her craft.



B.S. – Indiana University South Bend



# Emilie Buzzard, Huntington County Community School Corporation

Ms. Buzzard is a dedicated 3rd grade teacher who is committed to educating students, colleagues, families, and the community through establishing connections. Her classroom environment promotes fun, growth, and a sense of family. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary and Special Education from Huntington University where she received an award for Outstanding Future Educator. In her six years of teaching, she has served as a professional development mentor, Literacy Coach, presented workshops, and taken an active role in the community. She started the school's first ever robotics team. She is also in charge of the local Boys and Girls Club where she is responsible for providing children with mentorship, homework help, educational programming, and love.



B.S. – Huntington University



# Stephanie Chenoweth, Avon Community School Corporation

Ms. Chenoweth is originally from Minster, Ohio and is a graduate of Minster High School. She earned her Bachelor's degree at Butler University with a major in Middle and Secondary Education: Social Studies. Ms. Chenoweth has taught in Avon Community Schools for thirteen years, all of which have been at Avon High School. She currently teaches Geography and History of the World and United States History. In addition to teaching, Ms. Chenoweth serves as the facilitator for PBIS and is the head Unified Track and Field coach. Outside her responsibilities as a teacher and coach, she enjoys spending time with her husband Ryan and her three sons: Chase (9), Maddux (6), and Avery (4).



B.S. – Butler University



# Stephanie Coleman, MSD Warren Township

Ms. Coleman is committed to the success of students inside the classroom and in life. She holds dual master's degrees from Ball State University and a bachelor's degree from Indiana University - Purdue University of Indianapolis. Ms. Coleman is entering her thirteenth year teaching, currently at Hawthorne Elementary. She has served as a professional development mentor and presented workshops for new teachers, a cultural competence cadre member, and a grade level chair. She has served on the Response to Intervention and School Improvement teams. Ms. Coleman is committed to being a lifelong learner who educates and learns from students, colleagues, families, and the community through establishing strong connections.



B.S. – IUPUI

M.A. – Ball State University



# Kim Desper, East Noble School Corporation

Ms. Desper is a graduate of Purdue University with a Bachelor of Science in Consumer and Family Sciences. At East Noble Middle School, she has successfully reinvented the Family and Consumer Science program. Volunteering and giving back to the community are topics that are taught in Ms. Desper's classes. Volunteering is also important to her personally, as she gives of her time with the local 4-H students, mentoring their projects, and judging their projects. She is a member of the Noble County Extension Advisory Board and teaches Sunday School. She also works part time at a local fabric store and assists in the coordination of the Shipshewana Quilt Festival.



B.S. – Purdue University



# Amanda Dillon, Carmel Clay Schools

Ms. Dillon is a kindergarten teacher at Prairie Trace Elementary. This year will mark her 28th year as a Carmel educator. She received her bachelor's degree from Purdue University in elementary education and master's from Indiana Wesleyan in curriculum and instruction. In addition to teaching, she serves on her school leadership team, school improvement team, Boot Camp co-chair, supervises student and cadet teachers, and is the kindergarten team leader. She has received an IPALCO Golden Apple Award, the Outstanding Professional Award from Indiana Wesleyan, and is a graduate of the CIESC Teacher Leadership Academy. She is honored to represent her district and grateful for this opportunity to be an ambassador for teachers.



B.A. – Purdue University

M.Ed. – Indiana Wesleyan University



# Adam Ferguson, Plainfield Community School Corporation

Mr. Ferguson teaches CHAP, We the People, Dual Credit U.S. History, and AP Government at Plainfield High School (PHS). He has been a PHS teacher for six years. The Ball State University graduate holds a Bachelor of Science in Social Studies Education, a Bachelor of Science in History, and is a Summa Cum Laude graduate of the Ball State Honors College. He will begin work this July on his Master's Degree in History. Mr. Ferguson is actively engaged in student activities at PHS, serving on several committees, and sponsors three organizations at PHS: National Honor Society, student government, and Riley Dance Marathon. Mr. Ferguson also serves as the assistant varsity wrestling coach.



B.S. – Ball State University



# Lucas Gobel, MSD Warren Township

Mr. Gobel is a 7th grade science teacher from Raymond Park Middle School. Mr. Gobel is involved in the Boy Scouts of America and Science Olympiad. Mr. Gobel has coached his school's Science Olympiad team to invitational, local, regional, and national competitions. Mr. Gobel serves as the Associate Director for Indiana Science Olympiad where he has presented professional development at workshops. As an Eagle Scout, Mr. Gobel has served on camp staff every year from 1997 - 2017. Mr. Gobel has been recognized by the Boy Scouts receiving the "Silver Beaver" award and by the National Science Olympiad receiving the "Lockheed Martin Coaching Excellence Award." Mr. Gobel resides in Indianapolis where he enjoys Starbucks, pop culture, and superhero movies.



B.S. – Purdue University



# Linda Gomes, MSD of Wayne Township

Ms. Gomes has taught music to students ranging from pre-kindergarten to University level for 38 years. She received her Bachelor's in Music Education from Eastern Nazarene College, and her Master's in Music Education from Central Connecticut State University. Gomes is an accomplished musician; she has performed as a first violinist in symphony orchestras, and was the concertmaster at Central Connecticut State. Ms. Gomes is the recipient of several teaching awards such as: Who's Who Among American Teachers, Outstanding Teacher Award, Hartford Public High School Teacher of the Year Nominee, and Senior's Choice Awards. Ms. Gomes is the published author of "Wise Sayings My Mother Taught Me," a mentor to her students, teaches music, and also teaches values in her classroom.



B.S. – Eastern Nazarene College  
M.Ed. – Central Connecticut State  
University



# Peggy Green, Riley Hospital for Children

Ms. Green is an educational liaison at Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health. She holds a Master's Degree in Education. Ms. Green has 4 1/2 years of experience working with school-aged patients in a hospital setting, and 4 years of experience teaching fourth grade in a traditional classroom setting. Ms. Green provides educational advocacy services primarily to patients on the Hematology/Oncology and Stem Cell units at Riley.



B.A. – University of Notre Dame  
M.Ed. – DePaul University



# Jessica Hancock, East Allen County Schools

Ms. Hancock is a seventh and eighth grade language arts teacher at Leo Junior/Senior High School. Her passion for impacting kids' lives led her to pursue a career in education. A cornerstone of her teaching philosophy is that her relationships with students, parents, administration, and community influence student learning and success more than any other factors. In her spare time, Ms. Hancock volunteers as a youth group leader at Pathway Community Church. She credits fantastic teachers from elementary school through college for instilling in her a love of teaching. Ms. Hancock now resides in Fort Wayne with her cat and dog. She is grateful that every day she gets to do what she loves – work with kids.



B.A. – Franklin College



# Sandra Haney, Community School Corporation of Southern Hancock County

Ms. Haney, M.Ed., has taught speech, English, CMST 101, COMM 143, and COMM 148 at New Palestine High School for the past twenty-two years. She is also an adjunct instructor for the University of Southern Indiana. Ms. Haney created one of the first dual credit speech classes in the state and piloted the first known high school hybrid, dual-credit speech class. She designed, created, and teaches an online public speaking course. Her research has included creating online classrooms using Swivl and Screencast-O-Matic, and presenting with the Apple TV and iPad. She is the proud mom of Brooke and Bryce and the wife of Pat Haney, also a high school educator.



B.S. – University of Southern Indiana  
M.Ed. – University of Southern Indiana



# Elizabeth Hathaway, Mooresville Consolidated School Corporation

Ms. Hathaway has served as a first grade teacher at Northwood Elementary School for the past 14 years. She attended Ball State University as an undergraduate and completed her master's through Indiana Wesleyan University. Ms. Hathaway has been foundational in the success of Northwood's success as a two-time Project Lead the Way Distinguished School. Serving as a Launch Lead Teacher for the corporation, she has provided teacher training across the district. Ms. Hathaway founded the Botneerz Robotics Team at Northwood. This team has grown and become competitive, qualifying for the state championship. She is a wife and mother of three energetic boys. Her family enjoys spending days at the baseball fields, hiking, and traveling.



B.E. – Ball State University  
M.Ed. – Indiana Wesleyan University



# Tammy Haub, Clarksville Community School Corporation

Ms. Haub has taught 7th grade English/Language Arts at Clarksville Middle School for 24 years. She graduated from Indiana University Southeast with her Bachelor's Degree in Secondary English Education, and earned her Master's Degree in Secondary Education from ISU. She has served as a TAP Mentor Teacher and member of her school's leadership team. Ms. Haub has served on the school improvement team and as the 7th grade team leader, and has been a driving force for many innovative initiatives and student-based programs. Her greatest personal setback came with the death of her 11-year-old son with severe autism in 2013. While that loss is still extremely difficult to bear, she strives to use his memory and life to help her students have empathy and love for all people.



B.S. – Indiana University Southeast  
M.Ed. – Indiana University Southeast



# Craig Hendrick, Perry Township Schools

Mr. Hendrick teaches 6<sup>th</sup> grade Math and Science at Perry Meridian Sixth Grade Academy. Mr. Hendrick has earned master's degrees in both English Language Learners and Curriculum Development. He has earned additional licenses in both high ability and school leadership. In his 23 years in education, Mr. Hendrick has been a classroom teacher, mentor teacher, assistant principal, and regularly leads professional development workshops. He has worked in schools in Australia, Japan, Indonesia, and South Africa. He was honored as a 2018 Global Learning Fellow. He believes relationships are the key to education.



B.S. – Indiana University

M.Ed. – IUPUI

M.A. – Western Governors University



# Jan Hildebrand, Huntington County Community School Corporation

Ms. Hildebrand is a lifelong resident of Huntington County. She earned her bachelor's from Indiana State University. She began teaching at Huntington North High School in 2008 as JAG Specialist. During this time, she led her students to a 95 percent graduation rate and assisted students in being awarded scholarships. Ms. Hildebrand received State of Indiana Outstanding JAG Specialist. She earned her master's in Career and Technical Education. She currently teaches in the Family and Consumer Sciences Department: Introduction to and Advanced Child Development, Applied Nutrition and Wellness, and Human and Social Services. Ms. Hildebrand serves on several non-profit boards and volunteers for the United Way Campaign with her students, creating a new generation of servant leaders.



B.S. – Indiana State University  
M.Ed. – Indiana State University



# Ethan Hoffman, Indianapolis Public Schools

Mr. Hoffman is a ninth grade math teacher at the Newcomer Program. He has worked for IPS for three years teaching refugee and immigrant students. Mr. Hoffman has completed his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Master of Arts in Teaching. Mr. Hoffman has designed a curriculum and created a classroom supporting the specific needs of his students. In addition to teaching math content in all of his classes, he also teaches English, addresses his students' learning gaps, and acclimates his students to the American educational system and culture. His teaching and service are not limited to the walls of his classroom as he regularly serves throughout the school and Indianapolis community.



B.S. – Michigan Technological University

M.A. – Marian University



# Kim Hogge, Sheridan Community Schools

Ms. Hogge is a graduate of Judson College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art. She received her teaching credentials through Indiana Wesleyan University's Career Builders for Educators program after several years of homeschooling her own children. Prior to her full-time teaching position at Sheridan Community Schools, she worked as an aide in the Resource Department, assisting students with learning disabilities. She also served as a Title I aide where she assisted the past Teacher of the Year, Robert Picket. A past winner of Sheridan Community Schools Support Staff of the Year award, she has also been recognized as 2010 Secondary School Teacher of the Year. With a passion for students with learning disabilities, Ms. Hogge has used her own experiences to empathize and encourage these students to use their gifts to their fullest.



B.A. – Judson College



# Amy Holscher, Vincennes Community School Corporation

Ms. Holscher has taught in the Vincennes Community School Corporation since 2000. Her teaching career began as a second-grade teacher, followed by a year of teaching Reading Recovery, and for the past 16 years she has been teaching first grade. Ms. Holscher has been a member of her school's leadership team and serves as her building's Instructional Coach. She has been actively involved in curriculum alignment, textbook adoption, and professional development. She strives to be a leader to other teachers; however, her passion is for her students. She strives to help every student reach his or her full potential and develop a love for learning. Ms. Holscher and her husband Doug reside in Vincennes with their three children, Lanea, Jaxson, and Kaiden.



B.S. – University of Southern Indiana  
M.Ed. – Olivet University



# Diana Jasinski, South Bend Community School Corporation

Ms. Jasinski has been a public school educator for 48 years and has taught in SBCSC for the last 33 years. She and her husband Kenneth have raised three children. She has taught every grade in elementary, with kindergarten being the majority of her experience. She has also been involved in summer school programs including remedial, bilingual, and STEM. Ms. Jasinski firmly believes in frequent communication with parents and establishing student led Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences. She has shared her passion for thematic teaching and grant writing by being a facilitator at district workshops. Her goal is to instill in her students a sense of community service and the passion for life-long learning.



B.S. – Indiana University of South Bend  
M.Ed. – Indiana University of South Bend



# Nechelle Jones, MSD Washington Township

Ms. Jones has been an educator in the MSD Washington Township Community for the past 16 years. After completing her Bachelor's degree at Purdue University, she began teaching first and second grade. Nechelle was acknowledged as the First Year Teacher of the Year for her district. She has received the Golden Apple Award and was nominated for the Dr. Kosmas Kayes Educator's Scholarship. She serves on the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support committee. Ms. Jones has impacted the lives of her students in the classroom through interactive learning experiences that support all learners through the use of STEM, project-based learning, and even incorporating dance into her lessons. Ms. Jones is a passionate educator who takes great pride in the responsibilities of her rewarding profession.



B.S. – Purdue University



# Julie Judd, Fayette County School Corporation

Ms. Judd is a fifth grade teacher at Frazee Elementary School. In her 21 years as an educator, she has taught special needs preschool, third, fourth, and fifth grade. Her greatest joys in teaching have been the wonderful relationships she has developed with her students over the years, and maintains to this day. Ms. Judd believes these relationships are the foundation for all learning, and when students feel the genuine warmth and caring from their teacher, it opens many doors to their learning. Ms. Judd truly feels grateful and honored to serve the students and families in Fayette County.



B.S. – Indiana University East  
M.A. – Ball State University



# Amber Kosar, Elkhart Community Schools

Ms. Kosar is a K-12 Visual Arts Education teacher. She has been a teacher for Elkhart Community Schools for 18 years. During the last nine years she has been teaching the Graphic Design program at the Elkhart Area Career Center. Ms. Kosar started college as an architecture major and always enjoyed designing and technology. She started taking art classes and loved them, eventually applying to the art school. One summer during college, Ms. Kosar worked at a Girl Scout Camp and enjoyed working with the kids. It clicked to her that she could combine art and design with teaching. She then began her studies in education. Outside of work, Ms. Kosar enjoys hiking, being outdoors, as well as gardening and cooking. Her two sons are her world and they have a whole slew of animals including a dog, a cat, a snake, several turtles and toads, and a crawfish.

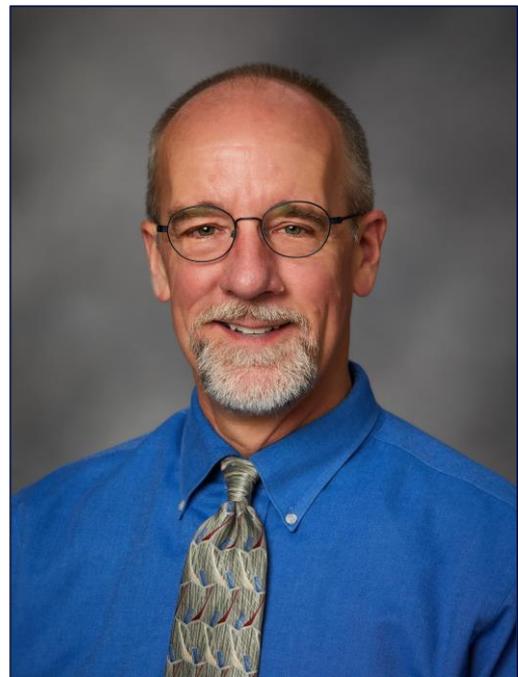


B.E. – Ball State University



# Sig Kriebel, Tippecanoe School Corporation

Mr. Kriebel teaches English literature and composition at McCutcheon High School. Prior to teaching, Mr. Kriebel worked as a sportswriter, columnist, copy editor and news editor at the *Lafayette Journal and Courier* and as a writer/editor at Purdue University. He earned his B.A. from Azusa Pacific with a double-major in English and Bible, and his M.A. in English from Purdue. Happily married for 29 years, Mr. Kriebel and his wife Mary have four children - a graduate student in social work, a worship pastor, a electrical engineer, and a future math teacher/coach. Mr. Kriebel enjoys sports, music, literature, and movies. He is a long-time elder in his church, where he has also served as an adult education director and Bible teacher. Mr. Kriebel is a published author of *Light of the World, Sparks Fly Upward, Above All Things*, and *A Swirling Whirlwind*.



B.A. – Azusa Pacific University

M.A. – Purdue University



# Maria Kussy, Hamilton Southeastern School Corporation

Ms. Kussy is the teacher-librarian serving preschool through fourth grade at Brooks School Elementary. She has been in education for 19 years, with the last two years as the teacher-librarian. She strives to build relationships with all students and colleagues through literacy, collaboration, and inquiry. Her goal is to build instructional partnerships with educators to develop learning opportunities of critical thinking, information literacy, creativity, and innovation. At the same time, she empowers learners to create using digital tools, and to develop into responsive readers. Her passion includes bringing stories to life, getting children excited about reading and writing in all its forms, and working towards equity and inclusivity. She is married to Michael Kussy, is a mother to five handsome boys, and is a foster mother.



B.A. – Marian University



# Kelly Lenkay, Christel House Academy

Ms. Lenkay started her educational career at the University of Dayton. Following this, she committed to a teaching service program that moved her to Indianapolis. During the next 12 years she worked on applying innovative, student-centered practices, learning new practices, and becoming the best educator she could be. Ms. Lenkay works hard at building and maintaining relationships with staff, parents, and students. These relationships help advance her students in the classroom and build a cooperative school and classroom community. She is currently teaching at Christel House Academy in a kindergarten/first grade loop where she is a grade-level lead and member of the leadership team.



B.S. – University of Dayton  
M.S. – University of Dayton



# Kelsey Long, Danville Community School Corporation

Ms. Long is in her sixth year as an educator, and her fourth year at Danville Community High School. Ms. Long is proud to work in the same school from which she graduated, and to serve the community in which she was raised. Ms. Long currently teaches English 10, 11, and 12, and has previously taught English nine, Yearbook, and Reading Intervention Lap. She has served as advisor for Student Council, Spell Bowl, and English Academic Team. She is also actively involved in a number of committees within her school. Ms. Long lives in Danville with her husband Cody, their son Weston, and their dogs Zoey and Reggie. Kelsey and Cody are expecting the arrival of their second son in December. As a teacher, she believes that a focus on student empowerment and individuality will cultivate a confidence and respect for learning and education that will last her students a lifetime.



B.S. – Indiana University



# Annie Lorek, Crown Point School Corporation

Ms. Lorek is a ninth-grade English teacher at Crown Point High School. Ms. Lorek serves as the School Improvement chairperson and leader of the English 9 PLC. She has had the honor of providing professional development within the corporation in the areas of curriculum development and relationship building. Ms. Lorek strives to provide her students with a skills-based educational experience in a strong learning community which focuses on fostering positive and meaningful relationships. Ms. Lorek lives in Crown Point with her husband Branden and their three young sons, Eli, Jonah, and Isaac.



B.A. – Saint Joseph’s College  
M.Ed. – Indiana Wesleyan University



# Susan Lukich, Greenwood Community School Corporation

Ms. Lukich has been a teacher at Greenwood Community School Corporation for 33 years. She has a passion for inspiring children to be lifelong learners through exploration and personal discovery. She strives to create a positive learning environment, emphasizing cooperation and teamwork. She has implemented several long-term programs and initiatives, including “Science is Fun Day,” a simulated real-world economy program, independent research projects, and many more. She has a strong desire to build personal, sincere, and lifelong relationships with her students. Ms. Lukich has been married for 33 years and has two grown children, two grandchildren, and many furry animals.



B.S. – Ball State University  
M.A. – University of Indianapolis



# Kimberly McClure, New Albany Floyd County School Corporation

Ms. McClure has taught in New Albany Floyd County School Corporation for 29 years. She is currently the math chair for the district and a math coach for her school. She has taught fourth grade, third grade, and special education. She was the teacher that piloted the inclusion program for special education students to receive their instruction in the classroom in which she is very proud of its success in her corporation. Her passion for teaching is evident in every aspect of her profession. Her personal involvement with parents is a very important part of her success. She has been married to Jim McClure for 33 years and has two girls. Her oldest daughter, Samantha, is married and just had her first grandson, Nolan, who is a year old. Her youngest daughter, Taylor, teaches at Greenvalley Elementary School and she has enjoyed sharing her passion of teaching with her.



B.A. – Indiana University Southeast  
M.A. – Indiana University Southeast



# Jim McFall, Brown County Schools

Mr. McFall is a teacher of biomedical science at Brown County High School. He has been an instructor at Brown County Schools for the past 16 years, spending the majority of that time teaching junior high school and coaching athletics. He recently established the biomedical science program at BCHS through attending PLTW trainings, designing a 21st Century lab space, and working to oversee the implementation of the program. Mr. McFall earned his Bachelor's in Education from Indiana University and Master's from Indiana Wesleyan University. He enjoys connecting students who are interested in biomedical careers with experiences and opportunity to explore those professions. When not in the classroom, he enjoys running and traveling with his wife and three children.



B.S. – Indiana University

M.Ed. – Indiana Wesleyan University



# Jeanie Mitchell, Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation

Ms. Mitchell has taught French at Penn High School for 11 years. She was recently named Freshman Academy Leader and she has worked to create a Tier 3 RtI program to pair up at-risk freshman students with staff. Through her French classes, she brings the world to her students providing learning based projects in her classroom, and field trips to Chicago and France. Ms. Mitchell frequently leads staff professional development on topics such as technology, literacy strategies, social media strategies, and effective parent communication. Ms. Mitchell and her husband Ryan have a son and daughter.



B.A. – St. Mary’s College  
M.Ed. – Bethel College



# David Nelson, MSD of Lawrence Township

“Learning should be fun, interesting, and deal with the big picture.” This has been Mr. Nelson’s educational philosophy since he first entered a classroom as a teacher’s assistant while in high school over 30 years ago. Since that time Mr. Nelson has transformed his classroom into a space station for first grade astronauts, and a movie studio for third grade film makers. Currently he is the Robotics & Design Teacher at Indian Creek Elementary, a job which combines both his love of technology and art. Mr. Nelson has a Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education from DePauw University and a Master’s in School Administration from Butler University. When not in his classroom building robots or LEGOs, Mr. Nelson can be found drawing his comic strip “My Geek Odyssey” or spending time with his wife and two cats.



B.A. – DePauw University

M.S. – Butler University



# Emily Nicholson, Western School Corporation

Ms. Nicholson attended Ball State University where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and Special Education, Mild Interventions. She has received licensure in Special Education Intense Interventions and a Master's Degree in Special Education. Ms. Nicholson teaches students in the life skills program as a part of a special education cooperative, KASEC. Ms. Nicholson has been teaching life skills for the special education cooperative for 11 years. Students in the life skills program have moderate to severe cognitive abilities and are taught using a functional academic curriculum. She has a great passion for her students and works diligently to give all of her students what they need to be successful. Ms. Nicholson and her husband Jordan live in Kokomo with their two young daughters, Charlotte and Hattie.



B.S. – Ball State University  
M.A. – Ball State University



# Beth Oburn, Brownsbug Community School Corporation

Ms. Oburn earned her Bachelor of Arts in Family & Consumer Sciences Education from Indiana State University, and Master's in Child, Youth and Family Studies from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Ms. Oburn has taught Family & Consumer Sciences for 18 years. She started her career in Florida, before returning to Indiana. She has taught Housing & Interior Design, Nutrition & Wellness, Advanced Nutrition & Foods, and Culinary Arts & Hospitality. Ms. Oburn has written \$30,000 in grants to expand students' educational opportunities in Brownsburg. Ms. Oburn is the building representative for the Brownsburg Education Foundation and the Staff Representative on the BEF Board of Directors. Beyond her teaching, she and her husband serve on the Executive Board of Shop For Kids, Inc.



B.S. – Indiana State University  
M.A. – University of Nebraska-Lincoln



# Gregory Olson, Michigan City Area School Corporation

Mr. Olson is a seventh grade teacher of English/Language Arts at Barker Middle School in Michigan City, Indiana. He has served as a classroom teacher for 18 years. He has coached boys and girls basketball for 16 of those years. He grew up and still resides in Chesterton, Indiana. The most important part of his life is his family. He is married to Heather Klein-Olson and has two sons, Cameron and Evan. He is the son of Donald and Sandra Olson and has one brother, Eric. He holds a part time position in the food and beverage department at Sand Creek Country Club. In his spare time, he enjoys playing golf, swimming with his family, and watching college football. He has a passion for thoroughbred horses and one day hopes to own the winner of the Kentucky Derby.



B.A. – Purdue University  
M.Ed. – Purdue University



# Trisha Peters, Richmond Community Schools

Ms. Peters is a graduate of Anderson University with her Bachelor of Arts in Art Education. She earned her Masters of Education in Instructional Technology from Waynesburg University. Ms. Peters has been an art teacher for 12 years serving in grades from Pre-K to 12, and has also taught glassblowing as an adjunct faculty member for Anderson University. Three years ago she moved to the Richmond Community Schools where she currently serves at two elementary schools -- Starr Elementary and Vaile Elementary. In addition to her role as an art teacher, Ms. Peters has served as a junior high track coach, Academic Team coach, Art Club sponsor, and judge for the Scholastic Art Awards in southwestern Pennsylvania.

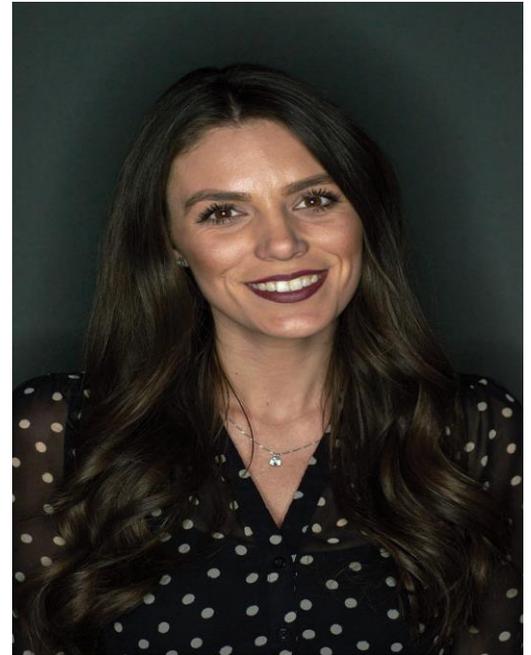


B.A. – Anderson University  
M.Ed. – Waynesburg University



# Krysten Plahm, Noblesville Schools

Ms. Plahm is a graduate of Butler University with a Bachelor's of Secondary English Education and has an English as a New Language Licensure. Over the past seven years, Ms. Plahm has developed and managed the English Language Learner Program at Noblesville High School. She forms deep relationships with her students in her classes as well as with their families. Her students trust her and see her classroom as safe space to learn. She expects high effort and achievement from her students and is a master at assessing where her students are academically. She is a leader among her peers and continues to advocate for her diverse students' needs. She serves on the district EL committee, is the founder and co-sponsor of the Interact Club, and is a honorary member of the Midday Rotary Club, Ms. Plahm is originally from Darien, IL and currently resides in Carmel.

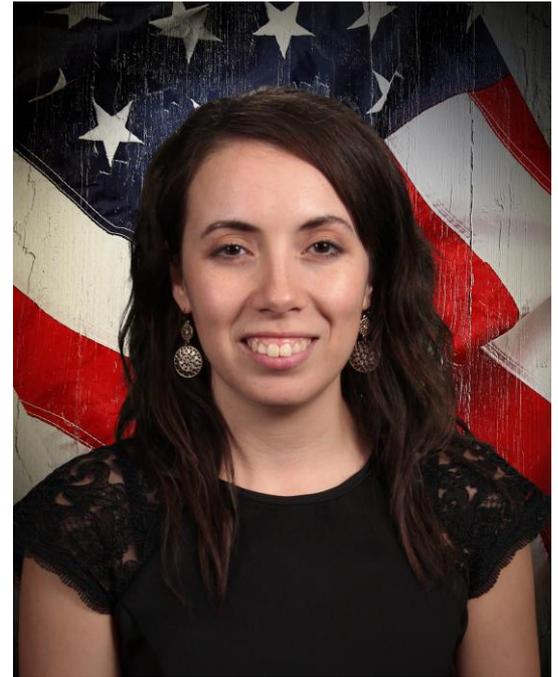


B.S.– Butler University



# Mariah Pol, Michigan City Area Schools

Ms. Pol is currently teaching both seventh and eighth grade social studies, at Barker Middle School. Ms. Pol recently was awarded as the 2019 Indiana History Teacher of the Year. Ms. Pol received her bachelor's degree from Indiana University, majoring in Secondary Social Studies Education. Ms. Pol studied abroad in Ghana, England, Cuba, and she did her student teaching in Ireland. She was awarded a Fulbright-Hays fellowship to study the history and culture of Morocco. Her interest in the Middle East and North Africa region was ignited in the Oleander Initiative, a teacher program in Hiroshima, Japan. She had also participated in the US Bilateral Arab Chamber of Commerce TEACH program to Bahrain. Ms. Pol is continuing her passion for research through the Korean War Legacy Foundation as a Teacher Fellow and conducting research on the Korean War.

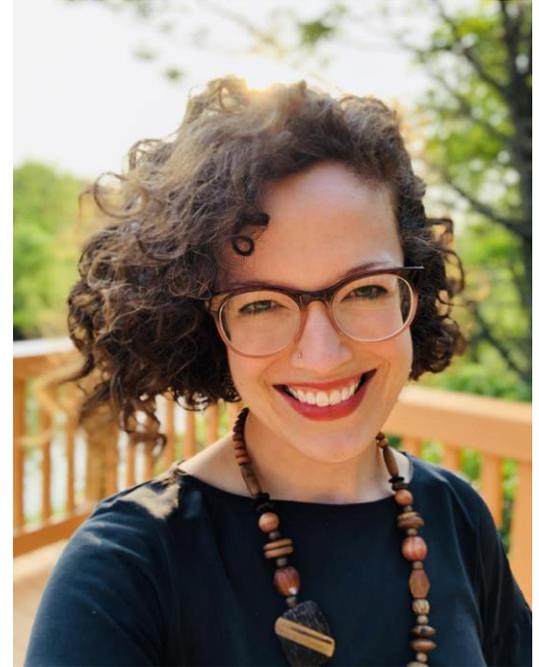


B.S. – Indiana University



# Katie Pourcho, Danville Community School Corporation

Ms. Pourcho is an imaginative, animated, and inspiring educator who infuses her experience as a professional artist into her classroom. Ms. Pourcho is a recipient of the 2016 Lilly Endowment, LLC. Teacher Creativity Fellowship, and a graduate of Ball State University Honors College. She teaches art to K-2 students at Danville North Elementary School.

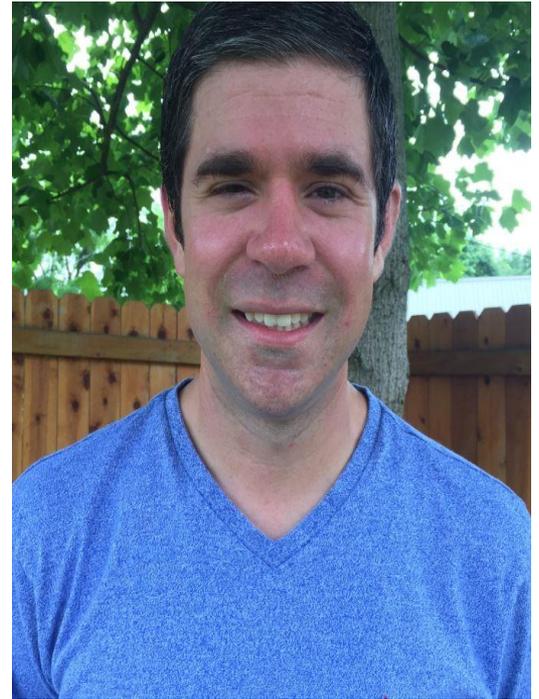


B.A. – Ball State University



# Chris Psimos, Peru Community School Corporation

Mr. Psimos has been a career teacher. After graduating from Purdue University, he accepted a job teaching fourth grade in Peru, IN. He met his wife there and has been happily married for over five years. Teaching with an incredible excitement and focus, the students that enter Mr. Psimos' class always leave a better student. Mr. Psimos has built a positive classroom environment where thoughts and opinions are freely exchanged without fear of judgement. It is also a classroom where there are very high standards to meet. Students are expected to do their best every day, and this is inspired by Mr. Psimos. He is also caring and empathetic and makes sure his students know that he cares about them and gives them the belief that they are special and can do anything with their lives. Mr. Psimos has made a very positive impact at Peru Community Schools.



B.A. – Purdue University



# Karen Rabideau, MSD of Pike Township

Ms. Rabideau is a fourth grade teacher at Guion Creek Elementary School. During her time teaching third grade, she earned her Master's Degree in Elementary Education. Ms. Rabideau received her Bachelor of Elementary Education Degree from Indiana Wesleyan University in 2007. During this time, she was the Computer Assistant at Deer Run Elementary School. Ms. Rabideau has been a Classified Employee of the Year at Deer Run Elementary School and received the Above and Beyond Award for her work. Ms. Rabideau belongs to a variety of committees throughout her school and district. She is always looking for new teaching techniques to help her students. Ms. Rabideau is a teacher who truly cares for her children, as if they are one of her own.



B.A. – IUPUI

M.Ed. – Indiana Wesleyan University



# Matt Rendall, School City of Mishawaka

Mr. Rendall is a Radio and Television teacher at Mishawaka High School. He started as a math teacher in many areas from 7th to 12th grade in algebra, geometry, statistics, and general mathematics. When presented with the opportunity to teach a brand new course, he worked tirelessly with his students to create a great Radio and Television program. While working on newscasts, student podcasts, stories and live events, students were learning how to run every part of the video and audio process to put out high-quality content for the YouTube channel, the Mishawaka Network. Mr. Rendall also spends his time building a better community inside the school, talking with students about difficult topics such as suicide prevention and depression. His caring nature and positive personality have made him a strong leader and role model for all high school students.



B.S. – Indiana University



# Christopher Roberts, Fort Wayne Community Schools

Mr. Roberts was born and raised in Fort Wayne. Mr. Roberts had two supportive parents as in Mike and Barb, as well as two brothers and a sister. His family has been in the field of education including coaching, guidance, and teaching. He began his educational career at his Grandma Helen's preschool - "Ding Dong School". He began his career as the instructor of Concrete, Masonry, and Cabinetmaking. Mr. Roberts earned a bachelor's degree from IPFW. He is involved with the SkillsUSA chapter in which he has coached 11 state champions and the fundraising for the new HVAC program. Mr. Roberts has been married to his loving and supportive wife Tarrah for 12 years and is the father of four beautiful daughters; Ella, Allison, Isabelle, and Emilie.



B.A. – IPFW University



# Andrew Roets, Franklin Township Community School Corporation

Mr. Roets is a sixth grade social studies teacher at Franklin Township Middle School East. His passion for learning was supported by his parents, who took him on adventures across the country to experience history and culture. While at Ball State University, Mr. Roets was able to participate in a project-based semester, volunteering with an after-school program, teaching him about the importance of community building and student relationships. He was able to participate in two teaching opportunities abroad, teaching kindergarten in England and Germany. These cultural experiences cemented his love of world cultures and history, and he received the 2012 Ball State Social Studies Student Educator of the Year award. Mr. Roets moved positions within his township in 2018 to teach the subject he was most passionate about, history.



B.E. – Ball State University



# Marius Sagnon, Southwest Allen County Schools

Mr. Sagnon was born in Burkina Faso (Africa). In his early childhood, Mr. Sagnon was shocked by the educational system of his country where less than 20 percent of children could attend school and less than 10 percent of students were reaching college – and made it his mission to become a teacher. While attending college at the University of Ouagadougou, he volunteered teaching uneducated adults, eventually becoming a teacher. He moved to the U.S. in 2003 and eventually started teaching high school as well as professing at IUPUI-Fort Wayne and Saint Francis University. He is currently teaching French at Homestead High School. Mr. Sagnon is also a published author, writing two novels: *Pour l'honneur de la France* *Autour du discours colonial* and *J'habite à la Pitié-Salpêtrière*.



B.A. – University of Ouagadougou

M.A. – University of Ouagadougou



# Allyson Smith, Brownsburg Community School Corporation

Ms. Smith attended Indiana University and received a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education with endorsements in both Kindergarten and Gifted and Talented. She has taught at Brownsburg Community School Corporation for the past 17 years. Ms. Smith helped pioneer the multigrade high ability program in Brownsburg and has remained a core part of that team for 15 years. She has served as a Mentor Teacher, serving on various curriculum, building, and corporation committees, coaching athletics, and serving as a delegate with the China Exchange Initiative to help implement an elementary foreign language program. Ms. Smith is an outgoing and devoted member of her community, and she has a passion for building relationships with the students and families.



B.S. – Indiana University  
M.A.E. – Ball State University



# Carly Smith, Center Grove Community Schools

Ms. Smith is an enthusiastic art educator who uses her creativity and innovation to motivate students, impact knowledge and facilitate a positive environment. As a true professional she is committed to instilling a passion for art and nurturing a lifelong love of learning in her students. She encourages a diverse learning experience amongst her students which provides them with the opportunity to achieve at their individual potential. On a personal level she is someone who will always be a role model for her students and will try everything in her power to make a real and lasting difference in their lives.



B.S. – Indiana University



# Tere Smith, MSD of Wabash County

Ms. Smith recently completed her 32nd year of teaching, with 27 of those being in first grade. She has been a first grade teacher at Southwood Elementary School for the past eight years. Ms. Smith earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degree in elementary education with a kindergarten endorsement from Ball State University. Her love of teaching and passion for enriching the minds of young children through hands-on experiences is evident in her daily lessons. She is an advocate for all learners and enjoys tutoring students. She has also worked with second grade students in the Wabash County YMCA SPARK program, helping prevent summer learning loss in reading and math skills. She and her husband, Brian, live in Wabash County where she enjoys reading, spending time outside, and making memories with her three adult children.



B.S. – Ball State University

M.S. – Ball State University



# Brandy Strand, Decatur County Community Schools

Ms. Strand has been an enthusiastic high school educator for 11 years. She is a graduate of Western Governors University and the University of Central Florida with degrees in nursing, biology, and science education. Education has always been her passion, and it continues to drive her to seek the best ways to reach her students and help them meet their goals. Her nursing background allows her to help students seeking health-related careers gain insight into the medical fields they are seeking entry into and the things they will need to be able to do in order to be successful. She lives in rural Indiana with her dog, parrot, and several chickens.



B.S.N. – Western Governors University

B.S. – University of Central Florida



# Elizabeth Stroven, Elkhart Community Schools

Ms. Stroven earned her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Ball State University. She has been working at Elkhart Community Schools for the past 14 years. She has taught several grade levels, kindergarten, sixth grade, fourth grade, and third grade. She was a 2018 Woodrow Wilson Grant Recipient, where she was selected to be a member of Cohort 3, to attain her Masters of Business Administration and Educational Leadership Degree from Indiana State University. Ms. Stroven knew she wanted to be an educator from a young age, where she would play school with her stuffed animals. She enjoys seeing her students learn new things and even on the rough days she is proud to be a teacher! Outside of school, Ms. Stroven is a wife and mother. She enjoys spending time with her family, going on vacations, and eating out at new restaurants.



B.A. – Ball State University

M.B.A. – Indiana State University



# Deborah Thomas, Mt. Vernon Community School Corporation

Ms. Thomas earned a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary History Education from Purdue University, a Master's Degree in Education from Butler University, and her Certification in English at IUPUI. She has taught seventh-grade social studies and language arts at Mt. Vernon Middle School since 1990. Ms. Thomas is a seventh-grade team leader, co-chair for the grade incentive program, and co-sponsor of the geography bee. She coaches the Social Studies Junior Academic Super Bowl team, and for 14 years in a row, the social studies teams earned a State Top Ten Award and two state championships. Ms. Thomas is passionate about providing educational opportunities for those inside and outside her classroom. She is the president of the Chapter EN Philanthropic Educational Organization which provides educational opportunities for women.

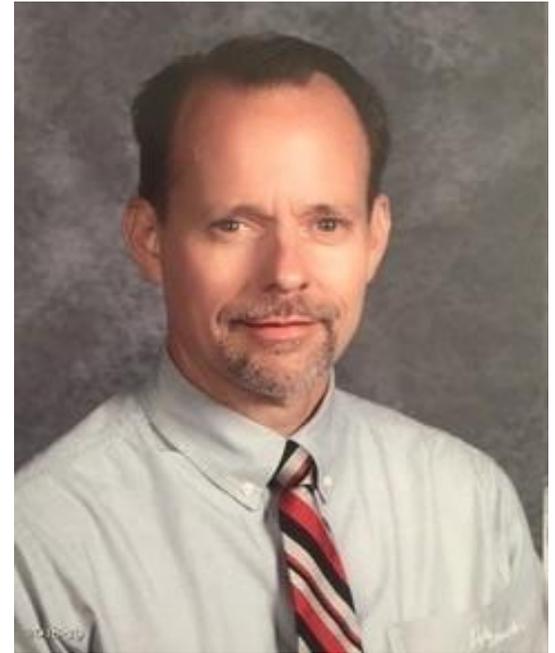


B.A. – Purdue University  
M.Ed. – Butler University



# Brian Todd, Fayette County School Corporation

Mr. Todd is embarking on his 30th year in education. Mr. Todd began his teaching career within the Fayette County School Corporation. He taught US History, US Government, and Economics for 15 years. Mr. Todd served as assistant principal for Northeastern Jr./Sr. High School. While there, he served as co-chair of a Student Engagement Committee, leader of student-led strategic planning sessions, and coordinator of staff-led professional development. When Mr. Todd returned to Fayette County, he served as department head, junior class sponsor, and on various other committees. Mr. Todd is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Organizational Leadership. He has been married to his wonderful wife LaTonya for 25 years, and they have three great children.



B.A. – Purdue University

M.A. – University of Miami of Ohio



# Lauri Vitale, Tippecanoe School Corporation

Ms. Vitale is a graduate of Purdue University with a Bachelor's in Elementary Education. She has taught fifth grade at Klondike Elementary for seven years and has also taught fifth grade inclusion classroom. She is a corporation leader in STEM education. Ms. Vitale is an elementary science chair for the corporation, commissioned Klondike STEM committee, and partnered with Purdue University and the SLED program as a master teacher. She was selected by the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc. as the 2019 recipient of the Cheryl Cowan Memorial Award for Elementary Science Teaching and by the Discovery Educator Network to attend their DEN Summer Institute. Ms. Vitale works with St. Thomas Aquinas Haiti Ministry, has traveled to Haiti six times, and has completed trips to serve as an English instructor. She currently lives in West Lafayette with her husband, Gabe.



B.A. – Purdue University



# Joy Volz, Hamilton Heights School Corporation

Ms. Volz has been an English teacher for 25 years at Hamilton Heights High School. She has taught almost every course offering in her department. She currently teaches two courses for Indiana University's dual credit program. In addition to her classroom responsibilities, Ms. Volz has led her school's improvement committee; coached tennis, volleyball, and cross country; sponsored the Junior Class, and mentored numerous peers. Ms. Volz graduated from Indiana University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and earned her Master's Degree in Secondary Education from IUPUI. Ms. Volz lives in Westfield with her husband and two children. She enjoys traveling, reading, and playing tennis.



B.A. – Indiana University  
M.Ed. – IUPUI



# Kristopher Walker, Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation

Mr. Walker began teaching at Tippecanoe Valley High School in January of 2001. He has since earned his M.A. in English from Indiana University. Mr. Walker has taught freshman through college credit courses in Spanish, English, and started a Peer Facilitator program. He has also worn many hats as a sponsor for various clubs, a coach, teacher mentor, department chair, and many more. While he truly loves his job, he also takes great enjoyment in playing drums for an all-teacher rock band, The Fi-Nights. Mr. Walker currently resides in Akron, IN with his wife and son.



B.A. – Wabash College  
M.A. – Indiana University



# David Winters, Mill Creek Community School Corporation

Mr. Winters has taught 7<sup>th</sup> grade English at Cascade Middle School for the last 14 years. Before that time, he was a graduate of Anderson University and Plainfield High School. In addition to teaching, Mr. Winters is an aspiring novelist who is currently shopping his first completed manuscript to prospective agents. When not teaching, Mr. Winters is an avid adventure traveler who uses his summer vacations to see the world (e.g. surf school in Costa Rica, volcano climbing in Bali, living in Ernest Hemingway's Paris room, etc.). In his free time, he enjoys reading, online gaming, and playing guitar with a group of life-long friends. David has no plans to leave Cascade and will likely remain at his current position until retirement.



B.A. – Anderson University

