



2020 Indiana Teacher of the Year Nominees

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



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



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



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



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.

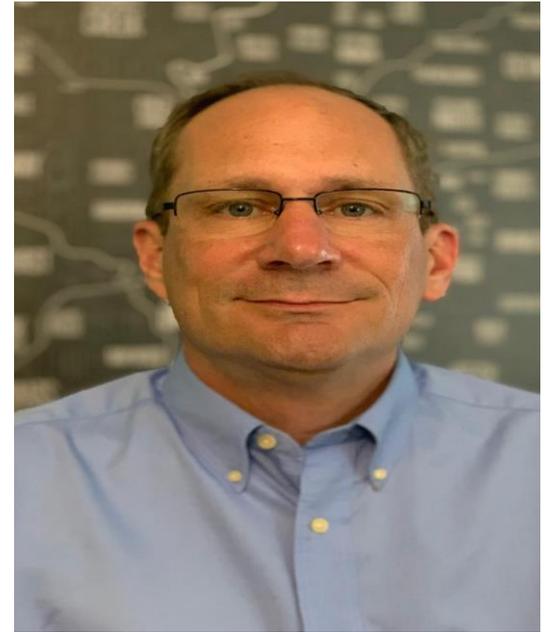


B.S. – Indiana University Southeast
M.Ed. – Indiana University Southeast



Craig Hendrick, Perry Township Schools

Mr. Hendrick teaches 6th 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



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



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.

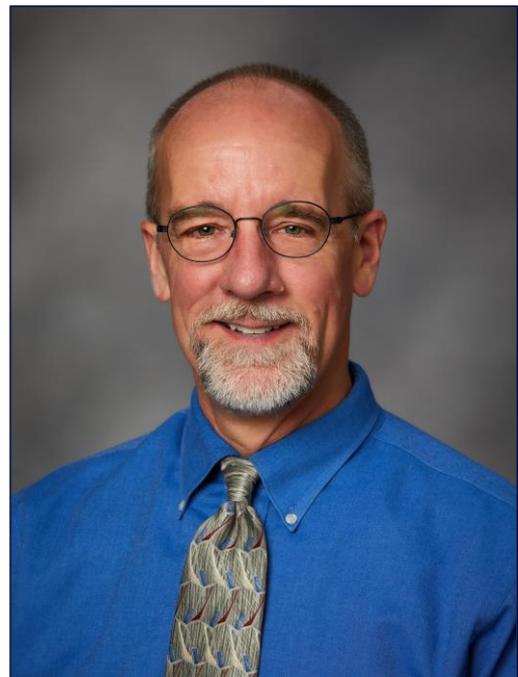


B.E. – Ball State University



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



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



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



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.

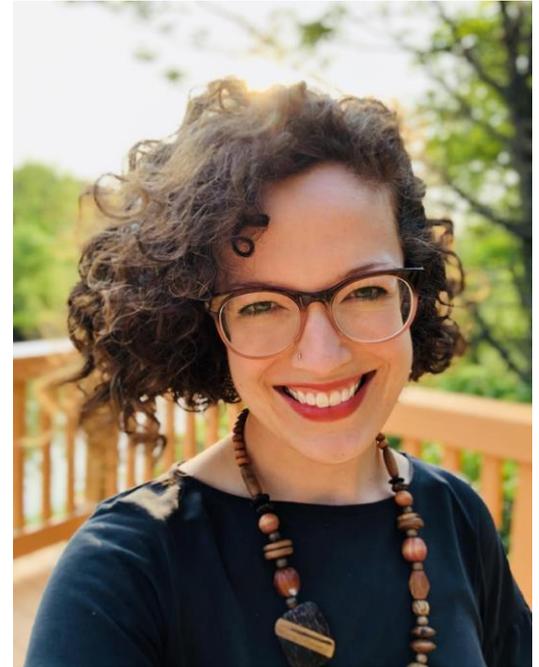


B.S. – Indiana State University
M.A. – University of Nebraska-Lincoln



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



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



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



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.

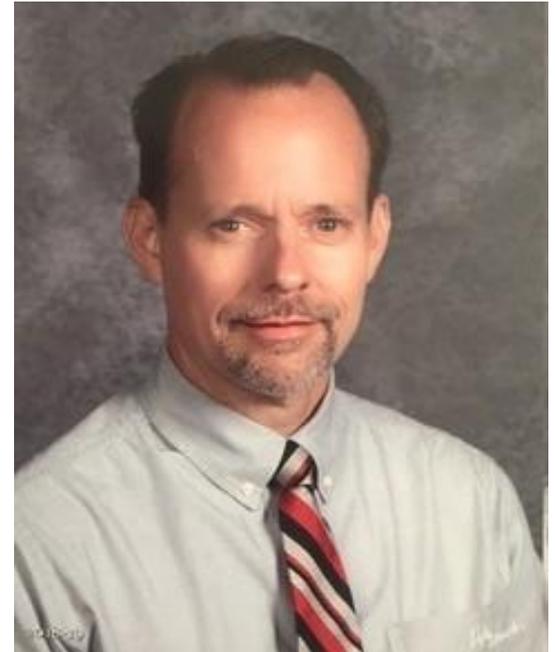


B.A. – Purdue University
M.Ed. – Butler University



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



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 7th 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

