

GREATER FORT WAYNE
Business Weekly

**EDUCATION
AWARDS**

Celebrating
the teachers,
principals,
professors &
counselors of
Northeast
Indiana



GREATER FORT WAYNE
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Daniel Walsh, Elkhart HS (West), STEM Subjects

What inspired you to become an educator?

As an undergraduate student at the University of Notre Dame I learned the lesson about always putting "Service above Self." Being a first-generation college student from a poor family I was extremely fortunate to attend Notre Dame fully funded by a Navy ROTC Scholarship. After graduating from Notre Dame I was commissioned as a naval flight officer and subsequently served in the Navy for 20 years. While in the Navy I always enjoyed learning a skill and teaching it back to others. It's appropriate that my final assignment in the Navy was back at the University of Notre Dame as an assistant professor of naval science. In this role, I was able to teach the next generation how to become better naval officers. After serving in this mentorship role at Notre Dame, becoming an educator after retiring from the Navy just seemed like a natural fit for me.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

I completed a degree in mechanical engineering at Notre Dame, and subsequently utilized the technical knowledge I learned every day while

flying the P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft in the Navy. Therefore, when I retired and became an educator, STEM subjects had naturally always been a passion of mine. Thus I migrated toward STEM. Throughout my career as an educator, I have taught a variety of STEM subjects, including physics, Earth science, astronomy, meteorology, and fundamentals of flight.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

The most challenging part of my career was gaining true leadership credibility after transitioning from the military into education. The education field is extremely peculiar when it comes to having proven educational industry experience before allowing someone to lead. Despite having had 20 years of battle-tested leadership experience during wartime, I had to prove myself. This was relatively difficult for me to be patient because I had been in numerous roles of significantly greater leadership responsibilities than all of my previous school administrators.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

The most rewarding part



of my career is helping to connect students to real-world experiences, which provide them with relevant knowledge and a passion for the STEM field. As a result of being successful in doing so, numerous former students of mine are currently pursuing extremely successful careers in STEM fields.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I am a Blue and Gold officer (volunteer admissions representative) for the U.S. Naval Academy. I help students who have applied to the Naval Academy navigate through the somewhat lengthy and cumbersome process of applying to the U.S. Naval Academy. I currently have two midshipmen at the Naval Academy with whom I recently worked.

they were fumigating his dormitory. As soon as he walked into my class he said, "I do not have a place to stay." I asked him, "What happened to your home?" He said, "My parents moved to North Carolina without telling me."

As it turns out, while Jake was going to high school and participating in Navy JROTC he was also working full time and contributing 40% or more to the family income. When he left to go to college that critical income stream for his family essentially stopped. As a result, his family could not afford to live in their house so they moved to North Carolina to live with other family members. However, they were too ashamed to tell Jake the truth, so they left without telling him. I did the only thing I could do and that was to offer to let him sleep in the supply room at the high school until he went back to school. In the morning I would bring him some food as well as sneak him into the locker room to get a shower. After that fall break Jake went back to school at IIT. He eventually received his bachelor's degree from IIT and was commissioned a naval officer through Navy ROTC, just like me.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

Never forget about the three R's in education – Relationships, Relevance and Rigor.

Do you have any books to recommend?

"The Path to Purpose – Helping Our Children Find their Calling in Life" by William Damon; "Row the Boat ... Lead with Enthusiasm and Optimism" by Jon Gordon and PJ Fleck; and "The Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell" by Oren Harari.



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Education Awards is a special supplement to The Star, The News Sun, The Herald Republican, Post & Mail and Business Weekly, which are publications of KPC Media.
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Ashley Johnson, DeKalb Central, Innovation

What inspired you to become an educator?

Teaching found me. I was working at a radio station as the office manager and on-air personality while I was completing my MBA. The radio station that I worked for closed and I found myself unemployed. A friend of mine told me about a business teaching position that was open and that I should look into it. I called to ask about the position, got an interview, and was hired, all in one day. That was 11 years ago, and I haven't looked back since.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

I have always had an interest in business and numbers. My husband and I also own a business. Being able to teach students about

the different opportunities in business and the perks of opening a business has been extremely fulfilling.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

The constantly changing environment of a school or the expectations of what teaching looks like has been challenging. COVID-19 brought on a lot of these changes that became the norm. These last few years have been a whirlwind.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

Being able to teach many of my classes as dual credit has been one of the things I am most proud of at DeKalb. With college being so expensive, it is important to give students every opportunity to reduce



that cost and graduate debt free. To date, I have been able to award students 527 credit hours absolutely free of charge. That is nearly \$80,000 in free college credits.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I am the president

of the DeKalb County Chapter of the STARTedUP Foundation. We hold Student Innovation Nights, where we partner with a local nonprofit. Students brainstorm ideas for problems that the nonprofit is facing. It's a great way to collaborate with the community while building innovation skills within students.

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

A few years ago, I had a student that had no intention of going to college. It just wasn't in the cards for him. I coached him as he competed in different business pitch competitions. At one of the competitions, he won first place, which came with a prize of 2 years of tuition for free. His

grandma was so excited, she hugged me tight. He was able to pursue his associates degree in computer science for free.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

Find ways to constantly remind yourself of the ultimate priority, the students. There are so many distractions along the way that can be overwhelming or frustrating. Keeping your most important goal in mind, gets you through those hard times.

Do you have any books to recommend?

"The Psychology of Money" by Morgan Housel; "Dare to Lead" by Brené Brown; "EntreLeadership" by Dave Ramsey; "Start" by Jon Acuff

WCCS Congratulates our 2022 Education Award Winners!



Renee Charles
Counselor



Sharri Pratt
Foreign Language



Kristin Rentschler
Social Sciences/History

Whitley County Consolidated Schools

WCCS

Small Town Values. World Class Results.

**Thank you for your selfless dedication
and passion for the students of
Whitley County Consolidated Schools.**

James Dirig, Fremont HS, Teacher of the Year

His school is his community

What inspired you to become an educator?

Great educators inspired me to become a teacher. Most influential to me was my 11th-grade English teacher, James Keeslar, who challenged me to think deeper while allowing me to develop my creativity. Early in my career, I even had the opportunity to work beside Mr. Keeslar as a fellow teacher.

What drew you to your specific subject of teaching?

I intended to become an English teacher, but after working in a math tutoring lab at college, I realized my passion for math. The math tutoring job was an opportunity that shaped my career path.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

The biggest challenge during my 29 years as a

teacher has been to stay relevant and flexible in the ever-changing educational landscape. Luckily, I've had the honor to work with excellent colleagues and administration that have supported and collaborated with me to better educate our students.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

The most rewarding part of my career has been the personal and professional relationships, including meeting my wife, who is also a teacher.

Are you involved in any community groups?

My school is my community, and so my time is spent both inside and outside the classroom supporting and interacting with students and their families. I can be found cheering at Friday night football, supporting the



school musical, assisting in National Honor Society volunteer hours, and lending a hand at many other school/community events.

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

Helping students to

learn math has always been fulfilling. A time I will never forget happened when my math academic team received 1st place at the state tournament in 2013. The team was ecstatic. What an amazing group of math students!

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator?

Have a passion for your subject and the desire to share that passion with your students.

Do you have any books to recommend?

There's a book called "How to Lie With Statistics," written by Darrell Huff. The book describes how to avoid the misuses of statistics in a reader-friendly style. I like to recommend this book to students because I think it will help them to better understand how math works in our daily lives.

Tracey Weirich, Elkhart HS, Special Needs Education

What inspired you to become an educator?

I was lucky to have been surrounded by fine educators from kindergarten through university studies. My mother was a teacher's assistant, which also inspired my decision.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

I am inspired by diversity, and neurodiversity is the area where doors have opened for me.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

The current state of education in Indiana is the

biggest challenge I have faced. Having my profession demeaned, my educational decisions scrutinized and funding funneled into private schools where my special-education students are barred is definitely the biggest challenge.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

Bringing United Sound to Elkhart High School so that neurotypical peers and neurodiverse new musicians can make music together has been the highlight of my career so far.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I belong to Prairie Street

Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

There are too many to men on here.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

I would tell them to follow their dream, to work hard and to make me for themselves.

Do you have any books to recommend?

"Not Far from the Tree"



Kristin Rentschler, Columbia City HS, Social Sciences/History

What inspired you to become an educator?

I had a few teachers that really made me challenge myself and believe that I could be a better version of myself. My middle school history teacher, Mr. Harry Harris, made me fall in love with history and my English teacher, Francis Stuckey Brown taught me to love the beauty of words. In high school, I was blessed with Laurel Steill and Robert Berry, teachers who made me want to go into the classroom and provide the lessons I had learned from them to young people.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

The more you learn history, the more our day-to-day world makes sense. As you uncover context, motivations, and behaviors, you can understand why we are the way we are in this moment. I love putting the puzzle together and I love watching my students “discover” how to put the puzzle together as well.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

The longer I teach, the harder it

is to hear some students’ stories. It breaks my heart the hardships some kids have been through, and you ask yourself “how can I get them to care about history when they are just trying to survive.” Class sizes also are not always ideal :).

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

I love watching students grow and be successful at all levels. Students who didn’t think they could research and write a research paper or turn that research into an exhibit . . . and then they do and they are so proud of themselves. That makes my heart bust.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I am a member of the Whitley County Historical Society Board, the Indiana State Board of Education, and St. Paul of the Cross church.

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

I had a student who was a member of a group that made it to National History Day’s national competition in Maryland with their group website.



They ended up winning the top high school award for the state of Indiana. On our car ride home, we were all singing, but he was sitting there quietly with a serious look on his face. Finally, he said, “I’m going to do this again.” And he did, but he also went on to become a powerhouse in the study of history at

our school. He is now a senior history major at Taylor University and heading to law school next year.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

Know your why. It can never be about accolades, accomplishments, or money. It always has to be about wanting what is best for the kids. That will keep you driving forward when there are so many groups out there that want to continue to hammer away at teachers. If you go in expecting to get the glory, you will become miserable really fast. It is a calling that has to stem from a love of helping young people be successful and know that they matter.

Do you have any books to recommend?

That is a dangerous question to ask. LOL! General pedagogy: “Teach Like a Pirate” by Dave Burgess; “The Writing Revolution” by Judith C. Hochman and Natalie Wexler; “Teach Like a Champion” by Doug Lemov; “Win the Day” by Mark Batterson. World War II history (my favorite topic): anything by Adam Makos or Alex Kershaw.

Chris Mettert, East Noble HS, Arts/Music

What inspired you to become an educator?

I had amazing educators in middle and high school. Those that taught the performing arts classes were above and beyond. Mrs. Geller and Mr. Norman inspired me to reach beyond what I thought I was capable of achieving.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

I have always had a love for music and theatre, and I knew that I needed to share that with others.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

Teaching choral music virtually was the most challenging. Not being able to see our students and make

music together was really tough.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

The most rewarding part of my career has by far been the people that I have had the privilege of teaching along the way. I have learned so much from my students and their families through the years.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I help with Gaslight community theater productions, and I am on the ISSMA Show Choir Board.

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

I have had many memorable teaching moments, and my

students mean the world to me, but for me the most special moments have come from being able to teach my own children. Seeing them succeed in the arts has been an immeasurable joy.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

Education is a difficult field, but the rewards are endless. Get to know your students. You may be the one adult human that will make a difference in their lives.

Do you have any books to recommend?

“Their Eyes Were Watching God” by Zora Neale Hurston and “Ragtime” by E.L. Doctorow are my two favorite books.



Joshua Schache, East Noble HS, Principal of the Year

What inspired you to become an educator?

My inspiration stems from seeing the way my high school football coach and my band director impacted my life along with other students' lives. These two educators were involved with students just not in the classroom, but outside of the classroom. Both had the ability to build relationships with their students. These two role models are the reason I know the importance of building relationships with students, parents, and staff and are part of the reason I have found success in education.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

I started as a strength and conditioning teacher, and when I started my administration license, I realized that I would have the ability to build positive relationships with students who could possibly need

more influence in their lives.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

The biggest challenge that I have faced is leaving my work at work. In the world of administration, there is always something new and challenging. Having the ability to leave work at work and focus on my own children can be a difficult task.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

The most rewarding part of my job is getting the opportunity to see students graduate who never thought that they could/would. Getting the chance to celebrate graduation day with these students is an irreplaceable feeling.

Are you involved in any community groups?

Drug Free Noble County and



multiple youth programs

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

I had a student in my office as a freshman who stated that they

would never graduate, nor did she care to. Four years later there was a picture taken of us high-fiving as she was going through to receive her diploma. Two years later, the same girl came to the school to share about the success that she was having in her life.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

The first thing I would tell them is to control what they can control. The second would be is to take time to truly get to know your students by learning about their interests and passions. These small steps will make a huge difference in building the relationship with the student and also will earn the student's respect.

Do you have any books to recommend?

"Gung Ho!" by Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles, and "The Coffee Bean" by Jon Gordon.

Justin Bock, Fremont HS, Athletics

What inspired you to become an educator?

I was lucky enough to have some outstanding mentors, classroom teachers who coached. Seeing people like Roger Probst inspire students in the social studies classroom and on the baseball field looked so fulfilling.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

Prior to my current role in the Franks School of Education at Trine University, I spent 19 years teaching high school English. I have always enjoyed reading and the challenge of writing effectively. Teaching English allows for such creativity and variety.

On the side of coaching, I originally thought basketball would be the sport I would pursue. My first five years of teaching, I coached 9th-grade basketball, JV baseball, and middle school football. It quickly became apparent that my demeanor was best suited

for the pace of baseball. Plus, I had the opportunity to coach for my high school coach, Roger Probst, and he was so focused on doing things the right way. I wanted to emulate his approach.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

I would say fighting my own natural inclinations. I am not naturally patient or calm, and early in my career I made many mistakes. Both in the classroom and on the field, I have had to develop internal filters that I run my responses through before they become public.

These filters ensure that I consider how my words and body language will be perceived, what the true message will be, if the purpose of my words is productive and positive, etc. Carefully considering these things has improved my relationships and impact on young people. However, even as I have gotten older, this is still a challenge.



What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

Getting the baseball program to the point where it is respected as much for the culture as for our successes. Both the Fremont baseball community and opposing coaches, players, and fans recognize our efforts to control our emotions, the

positivity with which we do everything, the respect we show umpires, and exactness with which we play the game.

Are you involved in any community groups?

Our family attends and is involved with Fairview Missionary Church in Angola.

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

I had a player who, in the week leading up to sectionals, quit the team because he felt my expectations were too stringent. In the summer prior to his senior year, we met for lunch and after a positive yet clear conversation, he decided to play again understanding what I was asking from him if he was going to have a successful return. Not only did he become a positive influence on his teammates, as he and I met each week to reflect on his progress, we became pretty close. Almost 10 years later, we still get

together for lunch a couple times a year.

That was one of many experiences that remind me how, with the right support, young people can exceed your expectations.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

For coaches, I would say determine what you want your culture to look like, sound like and then determine concrete action steps necessary to create that culture. Then, the coaching staff needs to model the characteristics of that culture. Even teams that don't win much can have exceptional seasons because if the culture is right the experience will be a good one with long-lasting effects.

Do you have any books to recommend?

"InSideOut Coaching" by Joe Ehrmann and "The Mentor Leader" by Tony Dungy.

Renee Charles, Eagle Tech Academy, Counselor of the Year

What inspired you to become an educator?

I very clearly remember how difficult the teen years were and wanted to be a positive adult support for students.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

I always felt pulled to counseling and after 10 years of teaching in the classroom, I felt I could better serve students in a role as a school counselor. I had a lot of students confiding in me and sharing their stories while I was their teacher and knew I could make a bigger impact as a counselor.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

The most challenging part of my career has always been knowing the trauma and hardships students are dealing with outside of school. I want to help instill hope that it can get better and that they have the strength to overcome. Not every student is ready to grab onto that hope, and not all have access to the resources and support they need.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

The most rewarding part of my career is without a doubt the relationships I build with my students over the four years I am with them in high school. It is amazing to be able to watch them evolve into confident young adults pursuing their full potential.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I have been active in many different capacities in my church including youth group, missions, teaching Sunday school, fellowship, and the worship team.

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

There are so many! I would say that any interaction I have with former students are so important to me. I have many students that I have either taught or counseled that reach out to me after high school. I still maintain a very close friendship with a former student from my very first year in education, 14 years ago. It has been so fulfilling to watch her



complete college, pursue a career, get married, and start a family. It is

a privilege to have a student choose to allow you to share in their the joys and trials of their lives beyond school.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

I truly believe that there is no greater calling. Education is one of the most rewarding, although taxing, careers. You have to do a heart check every year. If your heart is no longer in it, you could be doing more harm than good. More importantly, students can tell if your heart isn't in it. Do it with passion, or don't do it at all. I know that sounds harsh, but our youth deal with so much, and school needs to be a safe, supportive environment for them to be able to learn and grow.

Do you have any books to recommend?

I enjoy learning about students' emotional development and well-being. I recently finished "Maslow Before Bloom" by Dr. Bryan Pearlman, which explains the importance of ensuring students' basic needs are met in order to optimize their learning.

Sharri Pratt, Columbia City HS, Foreign Language

What inspired you to become an educator?

I was inspired by my mother, who has dedicated over 40 years to educating high school students. THANK YOU, MOM!

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

I truly recognize teaching as my purpose in life. I love to learn and spend my days encouraging others to become lifelong learners as well. With Spanish, I fell in love with speakers of the language, the culture, and the rich respect for families.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

The most challenging part of my career was during the

height of the pandemic. I remember desperately trying to support my students and their learning wherever they were living and whatever times they were available to meet and have class, all from the "comfort" of a Zoom meeting.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

The most rewarding part of my career continues to be hearing back from recent graduates telling me stories about their lives and when they used Spanish.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I am an active sponsor for several clubs at the high school. I am not officially aligned with community groups but I give my

time and talents to team fundraisers, team dinners, working a booth and more.

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

I have too many to choose from. I am planning on writing a book with all the good stuff to help fund a lavish retirement.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

Seek out opportunities where you can interact with students to gain experience.

Being an educator is highly rewarding in many areas, except your bank account.



Do you have any books to recommend?

I am an avid reader! Professionally, I just finished "50 Strategies to Boost Cognitive Engagement" by Rebecca Stobaugh. I've read

everything by Matt Miller from "Ditch That Textbook." I am looking forward to reading "Designing the Future" by Ann Kaiser. For fun, I read young adult literature that my students recommend to me.

Marianne Deitche, South Side HS, Language Arts

She's happy to see past students leading productive lives.

What inspired you to become an educator?

I am not sure what inspired me to be an educator, but I know who inspired me as an educator. I was blessed to have remarkable teachers with incredible knowledge of their content areas and a talent for teaching and interacting with children. Robert Wolf, Phyllis Bush, Lois Headings, Robert Kelly and Jane Langdon modeled compassion and kindness, infused confidence, created insightful lessons, and encouraged critical thinking.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

I have always loved reading, and I have always been drawn to the classics. My parents were readers; an evening did not pass that they were not in the living room after dinner reading *The New Yorker*, the newspaper, or a book of some kind. If we kids ever complained about having nothing to do, Mom suggested that we find a book to read.

When my college advisor asked me what I wanted to study, the answer was obvious: English! However, when he asked what I planned to do with an English major, all I could think to reply was "Teach?" It may have been a random answer, but it was definitely the right one. Once I started taking education classes, I realized just how much I wanted to instill in other kids the same love of literature that I had.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

Emotionally, the most challenging part was in 2010 when my district decided to reorganize the schools that were not performing well, and all the staff at those schools had to reinterview for their jobs. Many were not rehired at their home school and were

placed elsewhere. Prior to this, my school's staff and students were seeing positive change occurring in the morale, atmosphere, and academics; we were a family with all a family's quirks.

The decision to break us apart devastated us all: students and staff. What made it worse was that the decision appeared to be a reaction to President Obama's Race to the Top plan, and that is professionally the most challenging part; not just that plan, but every plan and mandate that has come from the state and federal governments in the last 30 years that have tied the hands of educators and kept them from doing what is best to educate their students.

Whether it is testing, banning books, requiring a specific number of credits for a specific diploma, preventing specific curricula, or tying money to their decisions, those who are not in education but are making decisions for them have had a misplaced focus. To put it bluntly, they are not thinking about what is best for children; they want what is best financially for them or their friends or whomever. Politicians who care about public education speak with and listen to public educators before making decisions that are going to impact the schools. Unfortunately, they are few and far between.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

Any time I see or read about a student who is living the life of a productive and responsible citizen, I am rewarded. My students have gone on to careers in finance, law, medicine, education, business, the arts, technology, etc., and when I see them thriving in their personal and professional lives and giving



back to their communities, I swell with happiness for them. In fact, the emotions are so overwhelming when I think about them that I cannot even put into words what they are. I cannot help but hug them and gush over them when I see them.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I have volunteered with the dogs at Humane Fort Wayne since 2016. It is so fulfilling to help the fantastic staff who spend their days improving the lives of the animals and the families who want to adopt them. I also enjoy sitting with the more frightened or shy dogs and showing them love at what must be a very scary time.

I thought, like many, that I would want to take them all home, so I made a deal with my husband that if an animal that I thought would fit in our family was still there two weeks after I fell in love that we would discuss adopting. However, I know that Humane Fort Wayne is going to make sure that they find the best homes for them, so I have not had to take one home

yet. Although there have been a few where it came close!

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

Oh, the students I will never forget! I may forget names, but I almost always remember where a student sat in my room and even discussions we had. There are so many who have made a positive impact on my life that it is hard to choose just one!

When I taught in Texas, I was the sponsor of a club that met during the lunch period. My group of students were so fun, but there was one young lady who just gushed with a love for life and a joy for learning. Sadly, she was suffering from leukemia and missed quite a bit of school after having a bone marrow transplant. When she came back, she told us all about it and when she would find out if it had worked, etc. At the end of that year, I left teaching for reasons not related to my students. I still have the T-shirt we made for our team, and every time I saw it, I would think about them fondly and

wonder how she was doing. Well, about five or so years ago, my sister-in-law sent me an article from a Houston-area newspaper featuring this student and her husband! She was in her early 40s, and they had their own foundation helping children. Oh my goodness, I cried such happy tears!

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

I always ask my students who mention wanting to be teachers why they want to be a teacher. They must love their content area and realize that they will be studying it during their entire career. They also must want to help students learn and be patient with those who may take more time than others. Finally, if they are excited about having summer, winter, and spring vacations, they must realize that those weeks will be spent wondering how they can improve their lessons and decorate their classrooms. They will buy posters at national parks, save fun shopping bags from bookstores, buy magnets from museums and gift shops, read books about how to reach their students, rewrite parts of their curriculum, and before they know it, their "vacations" will end, and they will be back in the classroom.

Do you have any books to recommend?

I love anything by Dave Eggers, but especially "What Is the What." Bel Kaufman's "Up the Down Staircase" is a wonderful timeless memoir of teaching in an urban high school. Tony Danza's "I'd Like to Apologize to Every Teacher I Ever Had: My Year as a Rookie Teacher at Northeast High" explains nicely what teaching high school English entails, even if you are being followed by cameras and only teaching one class a day. "Song of Solomon" by Toni Morrison blew me away!

Taylor Buzzard, South Side HS, Leadership

Smiles while remembering student's first trip out of Fort Wayne

What inspired you to become an educator?

My greatest inspirations in becoming an educator were the teachers I had during my high school and college years at Snider High School and IPFW. Mr. Didier, Mrs. Bubb, and professor Virtue instilled in me a true passion for teaching and learning.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

I was drawn to teaching French also because of my amazing teachers. Mrs. Bubb always captivated us with her crazy stories from Switzerland and Mr. Didier's eccentric person-

ality and high energy really drew me into the subject.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

The most challenging part of my career has been teaching through the pandemic and losing that face-to-face interaction that I was used to having in the classroom.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

The most rewarding part of my job has been having the opportunity to come to work and do something that I love each day, that is, speaking, reading, writing,



listening to, talking about anything related to French and other cultures around the world and then seeing students leave South Side High School to live abroad, continue learning French at the next level, or just running into a student in town and hearing a "Monsieur!" from across the parking lot.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I coach cross country and track and field, lead French Club, and travel abroad trips for students to France and Canada.

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

An interaction that I will never forget with a student was during our Winter 2021 trip to Chicago for a French cooking class at the Alliance Française. I had a student come on the trip who had never left Fort Wayne before. The look on their face the entire trip was a look of pure enjoyment and amazement. She took a picture in front of the giant bean in Millennium Park with a

huge wand of cotton candy bought from a local vendor and a smile from ear to ear. That image will forever be something I remember.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

My advice would be to buckle up and get ready for the ride and don't get caught up in the politics. Come each day to do what you have been called to do and the rest will work itself out.

Do you have any books to recommend?

I recommend "26 Marathons" by Meb Keflezighi. A book about human endurance and the will to persevere despite life's challenges.

Anna Glowinski, Trine University, Emerging Star

What inspired you to become an educator?

During graduate school I took a couple of courses in college science teaching ... and I liked it! I then had the opportunity to be a teaching assistant for an upper level Plant Pathology lab. After starting a family, I returned to my hometown and got a position at a local high school, and it was there that I discovered my passion for teaching. While I loved teaching high school students, I was offered a job at Trine University and have enjoyed being in higher education. I've even gotten to see a couple of my high school students at Trine!

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

I started out double majoring in biology and chemistry with the intent to go into the medical field.

During my time at Hanover College, I ended up taking plant biology and research methods classes because they were taught by one of my favorite professors. I also assisted with dendrochronology research during the summer between my junior and senior years. My faculty advisor suggested that I apply to a graduate program at the University of Missouri because of my interest in genetics. I applied and was offered a position in a research lab studying maize genetics.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

As a result of the global pandemic transitioning from traditional in class teaching, to online, and then to a blend of both of these methods while still providing the same level of instruction to students has been a challenge. While this has been a challenge,



it has provided me with an opportunity to learn about new methods of instruction.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

I love getting to know my students. It is one of the best parts of my job. I truly enjoy watching them

grow academically and am excited when they share their success stories with me.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I am an academic advisor for S.P.E.A.K. and Tri Beta, as well as serving on multiple committees around campus including the Center for Teaching Excellence, Open Educational Resources Committee, and the Honors Advisory Board. I also currently am a co-director of the Northeastern Indiana Tri-State Regional Science Fair.

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

It is hard for me to pin down just one because I have so many. If I had to choose one it would

be a student who really struggled with which career path to choose. The student started to worry about what her future would hold when she started to question her major. Through a series of exploration meetings we found a path best suited to their interests and now this student has taken it to the next level by returning to the classroom to educate undergraduates.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

Expect the unexpected, keep an open mind, be willing to try new things.

Do you have any books to recommend?

I would recommend anything by Thomas R. Guskey. His books have helped me improve my method of assessment as well as incorporate mastery learning into my courses.

Earl Brooks II, Trine University, Lifetime Achievement

What inspired you to become an educator?

I was raised on the family farm in a small community of 4,000 called Harrogate, Tennessee. I graduated from a small high school where my graduating class was the largest in school history with 100. I went on to the University of Tennessee and obtained an undergraduate degree in animal science, as well as a master's degree in management and a Ph.D. in animal nutrition.

I was the manager of the animal research station at the University of Tennessee. After I finished my master's degree, I began teaching at Lincoln Memorial University in 1980. I loved classroom teaching, and taught for three years before starting on my doctorate.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

After I obtained my Ph.D., I became an academic department chair, then a school dean and eventually became the vice president of academic affairs before moving into other administrative roles. During that time, I awakened to the crucial function of fundraising and development in a university's success.

After leaving Tennessee, I went to Wesley College in Delaware where I served as executive vice president and chief operating officer. I was responsible for all university operations and reported to

the president. After three years, I knew I wanted to pursue a presidency.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

I came into this as the youngest president of the state at 44 and sat down at my desk and realized there was no playbook for what I was doing. There was a very solid foundation of academic as well as athletic programs, and a very committed faculty and staff that I've been impressed with since Day One, but we needed to re-establish lines of communication with alumni and facilities sorely needed attention. In my inaugural address I came up with 16 points of change for the university. We went at those very aggressively. We were able to work through those at a fairly brisk pace in the early years and since then we've moved to other multiple sets of goals.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

Seeing the incredible growth spurred by the quarter of a billion dollars we have raised during my tenure. Those efforts have allowed us to provide the facilities to support what we've done both academically and athletically. And that fact that while growing, we've been able to maintain our identity. We have not lost the personal touch. We've



been able to retain the small student-faculty ratio that's very important for student success.

Are you involved in any community groups?

I have been involved or am involved with the following:

Indiana Chamber of Commerce
Northeast Indiana Regional Chamber
Independent Colleges of Indiana

Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association Presidents Council
Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum
The Council of Independent Colleges
American Council on Education
National Association for Independent Colleges and Universities
National Collegiate Athletic Association
Association of Governing Board of Colleges and

Universities

Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

There have been so many over the years that it's impossible to choose just one. In particular, I've enjoyed speaking with literally thousands of alumni during my time as president and hearing about the positive impact a Trine University education has had on their life and career. Each story is special to me and a reminder of why I do what I do.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

To anyone aspiring to leadership: Be bold in your vision, stick to your beliefs, listen to the market but don't be afraid to take a calculated risk. Remember that higher education is a business. You're not in the for-profit world, yet you have to have financial strength and viability. Growth is a necessity. And, people make the institution. Hire great people with talents greater than yours and don't be threatened by that.

Do you have any books to recommend?

Voracious reader of biographies, particularly related to leadership and management, including national/world leaders.

KPC Media/Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly Education Awards

Congratulations

ENSC Great Students Great Schools Great Communities East Noble School Corporation

Josh Schache
Principal
Award Winner

Chris Mettert
Arts & Music
Award Winner



April Marshall, Cleveland Elementary School, Early Childhood

What inspired you to become an educator?

I always loved school and felt I wanted to be a teacher. While growing up I always loved being around children and helping them learn. Math was an easy subject for me, so I especially liked explaining it to others and helping them to become successful.

What drew you to your specific subject/field of teaching?

While attending Purdue University, I was able to student-teach in kindergarten and 2nd grade. I instantly fell in love with kindergarten! The energy and enthusiasm that kindergarten students have for learning is the best thing one can experience.

What has been the most challenging part of your career?

The biggest challenge I have is continuing to have children play and have fun at school while at the same

time learning all of the important skills they need. Kindergarten students need to have hands-on playtime in order to build all of the social skills they need, along with the academic skills.

What has been the most rewarding part of your career?

I love when former students come back to visit or reach out on social media. It is amazing to think I was able to be a small part of their lives so many years ago. One of my previous kindergarten students is a first-year kindergarten teacher in Elkhart this year. That is amazing!

Are you involved in any community groups?

I am involved with my church, St. Mary's of the Annunciation in Bristol. I have attended church there since I was in middle school. This is where my own children have grown up too. I am also involved in activities with my own children through their school.



Tell us about an interaction with a student that you will never forget.

I have a previous student who lost her mother while in my kindergarten class. Of course that was a very traumatic event in this little girl's life. Thankfully, I have been able to maintain a relationship with her even

though she has moved out of state. Building these lasting relationships is something that truly warms my heart.

What advice would you give to someone who would like to be an educator one day?

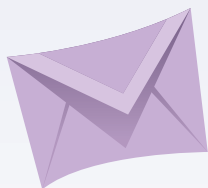
Follow your heart! Being an educator today can be quite challenging. However, if this is what you are truly called to do with your life ... there is no greater reward. It is amazing every year how quickly the children in my class become "my kids." If you are like me, you will find yourself thinking about them all the time.

Do you have any books to recommend?

I love to read books from several different authors. In kindergarten, we especially love Mo Willems, Eric Carle, and Kevin Henkes. At the beginning of every school year, I spend a lot of time reading MANY stories about friendship. I especially like the Pout-Pout Fish series by Deborah Diesen.

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