

# School District of BELOIT

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January 2022 - I Believe in our Kids, our Teachers, and our Community

## From Understanding to Connections to Opportunities

For 30 years, I taught math, both at the middle school and high school level. I have taught everything from 7<sup>th</sup> grade general math through AP Calculus BC (college level Calculus 2). Over those 30 years, I found that if I could make math challenging, interesting, intuitive, and/or relevant to students, they often found success. Some students like to work together to solve challenging problems; others like to work independently, all need to be able to do both.

I grew up in Beloit, attending Todd, Aldrich, and Beloit Memorial. At every level, I had experiences that allowed my talents and interests to grow. I learned high school Geometry in my drafting classes in grades 7-9 as I applied the concepts necessary to complete the drafting assignments. I formalized my learning of Geometry in my 10<sup>th</sup> grade Geometry class. I learned how to speak in front of groups in my Marketing classes and the DECA Club, so my college Speech class was a breeze, even for this shy kid! The business proposal I wrote in my Marketing 2 class taught me as much about writing as the essays I wrote in English class. In fact, the proposal gave purpose to the skills I was learning in English.

I did not recognize these connections while they were happening; I began to realize them as a young teacher trying to help my students gain an intuitive understanding of mathematics. As I grew as a teacher and I thought about my students and (eventually) my own children's experiences in our schools, I noticed that some students had similar experiences to mine. In contrast, other students seemed lost and had far different experiences. When the position for Career Academy Coach opened, I decided that this was a great opportunity for me to continue to grow, learn, and serve in a new capacity.

## Academies Open Up Doors to a Bright Future

Beloit is my home. I bleed purple. I believe in our kids, our teachers, and our community and am hopeful that the academies will help many more of our students have a high school experience that will allow them to explore interests, find relevance in their course work, to find ways to grow as a community member, so they are well-prepared for whatever path they choose after high school.

For years, individual teachers and groups of teachers have achieved this for some of our students; the academies provide this opportunity for each and every student. As the Career Academy Coach, I hope to continue to find ways for our school to partner with the business community,



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parents, local educational institutions, and local non-profits. Through our career academies and the partnerships we build, I am hopeful each of our students will find their talents and passions and build on those to develop the skills and confidence to progress toward a career that will allow them to live comfortably, provide for their family, and contribute to the greater good of their community.

## Career, College, and Community Ready

Through the community and parent partnerships, I also hope to educate our students and parents about the variety of opportunities our students have to enter high-pay, high-demand careers. There are multiple ways students can prepare for these careers. Whether they enter an apprenticeship, attend a local technical or community college, attend a 4-year college or university, or enter the military, these careers are accessible to our graduates. In fact, a student who works hard throughout high school, challenges themselves to take rigorous courses, and who takes every opportunity to learn, will graduate from our high school with industry certifications, college credits, and/or an associate degree in a field of interest.

Whether your student wants to be a nurse, a welder, an entrepreneur, a financial planner, a scientist, a project manager on a construction site, a restaurant owner, an engineer, or any of a number of other careers, we have an academy and a pathway that will help them explore and prepare for their next steps. Couple this with the amazing amount of extra-curricular activities and athletics offered to our students, and the sky is the limit. Your student will find their place and be in a position to look ahead to their future.

When our students thrive, our community thrives, and then we will all look forward with excitement and anticipation.