

February Teacher Feature: Andrew Kaucher, High School English Teacher

What can a pencil do for all of us? Amazing things. It can write transcendent poetry, uplifting music, or life-changing equations; it can sketch the future, give life to untold beauty, and communicate the full-force of our love and aspirations.~ Adam Braun



Andrew Kaucher is in his second year teaching English at Clearbrook-Gonvick Public School. He presently lives in the Bemidji area with his wife and fellow teacher, Amanda and their tiny dog, Etta.

Andy was born and raised in southeastern Pennsylvania, he has always loved reading and writing. He played hockey all throughout school and started playing guitar in the fifth grade and never stopped; he plays a lot at church nowadays. Andy's faith and church family will always be important in his life.

As to how he came to northern Minnesota from PA? His wife and he moved here almost 2 years ago. Andy came to go to BSU for post-grad studies. They were both excited about the adventure of moving to another part of this beautiful country.

Why did you choose to teach? I never was the best student I could be in high school, and I was pretty quiet. When the decision for college came around I made the choice to major in English just because I loved books and writing. From there I really think teaching came out of my love for writing and reciting poetry. Performing poetry you've written yourself is not unlike teaching. You take something important that you believe and that has changed you and explain it to the world in a way that you hope truly makes a difference in the life of anyone listening.

What did you do before coming to Clearbrook-Gonvick? I taught English part-time, worked in a marketing office doing graphic design and had a small art studio.

What is the best part of your job at Clearbrook-Gonvick? The students. Nothing is better than seeing a student's reaction and demeanor change when they finally understand something important!

What is the biggest challenge of your job? The students. Nothing is more challenging than seeing students with real potential and ability not believe in themselves.

If you could have any job in the world - what would it be? Why? Honestly, truly, really, I think I'd be a teacher even if I won the lottery. I care a whole lot about showing all my students the power in the words that they speak and write and the power in reading the words that other people have written. But when that fateful day of retirement comes, I'd like to open up a small cafe and be smiling my way along, serving pizza, chicken wings, and joy to the masses.

What do you do when you are not working at the school? Most of my non-school days are spent simply. My wife and I love just reading or writing together. We've been singing and playing music more and more. We're avid fans of a few television shows, too. Other than that you might find me cooking pizza or grilling outside (when it's warm enough). I'm always up for a long bicycle ride, too!

February is kindness month. What is something you do to achieve the "Kindness Challenge" during this month? Kindness is a choice every day. One thing I really want to continue to do is never stop being kind to students every day, no matter what has happened in days past. We all have off days, we all forget assignments, we all get distracted, but to give others a chance to start anew each day is a great way to be kind.

What are your favorite aspects of the Clearbrook-Gonvick community? There's such a strength in this community! I have never been a part of a community that cares so much about its students and genuinely wants to see them all succeed and find their place in this world. It's a beautiful thing.

And now a word or two about Mr. Kaucher from the students he teaches...

What do you think Mr. Kaucher does when he is not at school? "Reads books" "Makes bow ties and lives up to it" "Reads and creates stuff with this wife" "He watches TLC at home" "Reads or does school work" "Reads, sews, watches movies, plans cute things to do with his wife" "He sits in a dimly lit room and reads books" "Reads books and enjoys time with his wife"

What is the best thing about Mr. Kaucher? “His bow ties!!! He’s also really nice and chill” “He knows how to joke around with his students without things getting out of hand” “He’s always happy and has a smile; He’s positive and optimistic.” “He’s always positive” “He is always willing to help us students with our assignments if we are stuck. He tells us to try our best.” “His bow ties” “He takes it easy on his students. He’s laid back.” “He is always positive even when you get answers wrong”

What do you think Mr. Kaucher was like when he was in high school? “I think he was like that nerdy jock, the one that’s super nice but athletic at the same time.” “Fun. Liked English class. Smart student.” “I believe he knew how to have a good time but still did all his school work before doing anything else.” “A jock, but nerdy.” “Nerdy” “He was the life of the party with a mullet.” “He was super nerdy.”

What do you think is Mr. Kaucher’s favorite book to read? “Any book from William Shakespeare” “All of them” “Adventure and Fantasy books” “Some romance story” “He likes Shakespeare so I am going to say ‘Hamlet’” “A really long historical fiction” “The dictionary” “Any novel or big book”

If you could send Mr. Kaucher on a vacation anywhere in the world, where would you send him? Why would you send him there? “I wouldn’t because he’d probably realize it’s too cold in Minnesota and never come back!” “The Greek Islands because I can see him being fascinated with them.” “Europe because there is a lot you can discover and learn there.” “Caribbean because it is unique like him” “Hawaii because he deserves a break from the students plus I think he would like the Hawaii vibe.” “Back to Pennsylvania to see all his old friends.” “I would send him to Europe. I think he would fit in there.” “To the beach so he could do something fun.”

Besides being a teacher, what is another job you could see Mr. Kaucher doing? “McDonald’s worker. His is friendly” “Librarian” “Working at a ski lodge” “Uber driver” “I could see Kaucher being an artist or making comic books.” “A fashion designer” “A professional hockey player or a motivational speaker” “A barber or a hockey player”

What is one thing Mr. Kaucher ALWAYS says? “Fantastic.” “Get out of my seat.” “Fantastic.” “Cool, cool.” “FANTASTIC!” “Do what you think is best.” “Cool, cool.” “Guys, keep working.”