



2019

Educator Comments

Brad Portis

I realize that my students will face challenges in their future far greater than I can simulate in the classroom. I know that they will reach for goals that are far beyond what they can probably even imagine right now. I try to help my students achieve well beyond what they may have initially believed they could accomplish. I try to push them past their “comfort zone,” but into an area that is still within their reach and become very productive. This push and motivation is more effective if you have first proven to your students that you care, not just about their performance; but also that you care about them as individuals. This allows students to re-focus their future goals higher and more realistically. It also helps build self-confidence and independent initiative that our young people will need when teachers and parents are no longer around...

Brad Portis

...My goal is to build confidence by helping students test their limits, become independent learners, persevere and achieve. Justin Walker and Mia Tucci have both challenged themselves, both in and outside the classroom. Each has taken on challenges that were not required; but because they wanted to achieve in yet another area. They are super people not only because of their accomplishments and personalities; but because they are willing to extend themselves in order to grow. It is students like these who not only impress me; but inspired me to do my best every day - because they certainly do!

Rex Hafer

Every teacher should have a student like Will Shaw. A student who makes our job a joy every day through their hard work and preparation. Will not only advances our class every day with his input and presence, but has made me a better teacher through his questions, drive, and honestly just wanting to stay one step ahead of him. I've tried to help prepare Will for his future as we all do, but I'm sure Will's impact on my future will be even more substantial. Thanks, Will.

Tia Hohler

Kevin is not only a very intelligent person but he is very down to Earth. He likes to make jokes, laugh and be sarcastic. He understands hard work but that life must be balanced with fun, too. He is insightful and curious about the world. He's going to make a great doctor because he works hard, but more importantly, he understands people.

Anne Lewis

I strive to equip my students with a sense of themselves as individuals, as well as members of multiple communities. I strive to equip my students with compassion, patience, and integrity by holding them to the highest standards of these qualities and by exploring literature that examines chiefly what it is that happens when we lose our humanity. I hope I equip my students with the ability to laugh at themselves as they move through the world, to appreciate what it means to be alive and to live with purpose as it is my firm belief that none of us is here by accident. The Universe is an efficient mechanism, after all.

Mark Cardwell

It is a privilege to work with these students on a daily basis. I am honored to have the opportunity to offer them chances to learn, to challenge them, and, occasionally, to coach them when appropriate. Our students make every day at school worthwhile, interesting, and meaningful.

Linda Lee

In today's world, it is my job to equip students with a skill-set for jobs that may not yet exist. With that in mind, it is important for me to help students to become creative problem solvers, effective communicators, team players and to embody the characteristics of resilience.

Virginia Ruimveld

As an educator, I have always felt that it is my duty to instill a life long love of learning in all of my students. I want them to leave me with great skills for learning, but also wanting more at their next level of education. Maddie was the student in 5th grade that always wanted to know more. She excelled in all that she did, but always worked to be the best version of herself not only academically, but also in the way she treated everyone! She is an inspiration and I am proud of the young women that she has grown up to be.

Matthew Porco

As a history teacher, one of my primary goals is to push my students to see the study of the past as a dynamic and evolving experience that has profound implications for present and future events. Carter and Christian have both demonstrated intellectual curiosity and sophistication that has greatly enriched the courses during which I had the privilege to work with them. They will undoubtedly inspire their future educators as they have inspired me for the past three years.

Eric Lancaster

I love making personal connections to content in psychology. I believe if students can relate the content to their lives, it is a great way to make it meaningful and enhances semantic memory.

Justin Ansel

I had the unique opportunity to coach Branden in soccer starting in 6th grade and watched him grow into a star defensive player for our high school team which won 3 conference championships and a district championship. The leadership he provided for our team on and off the field was amazing. He was a three-sport athlete who also challenged himself with rigorous courses. I look forward to seeing what he will accomplish in the future, and I am honored to be part of the journey.

Philip Kilian

Athletics are a great tool to teach students valuable life lessons. As a soccer coach, I have the opportunity to teach the game of soccer, but also challenge the players to be better men at school, at home, and in the community. It's an honor and humbling to know that a player that I respect as much as Austin Strahan is challenged by those lessons. Austin received the first "Man of Character Award" given to the player who demonstrates the values of servant leadership, encouragement, and hard work. The way he leads on and off the field made him the obvious choice among a great group of guys.

Beth Rhodes

Science and scientific literacy are an important part of all aspects of life. Students need to be able to practice and grow their ability to think and to think about science. I strive to provide students with information and then questions that cause them to question how to use that information.

Becky Cooper

Students want to be engaged and challenged. By providing an atmosphere that fosters exploration and dialogue, our students grow excited to learn the size of their minds. As teachers, we must help our students gain confidence in their abilities and voices. Once they feel that sense of discovery and empowerment, they are on the path toward shaping their destinies. I believe the process of writing and the exploration of literature are two powerful means for preparing young people to use their critical reasoning skills to overcome the obstacles that life will inevitably place in their way....

Becky Cooper

...By studying the human condition, they will appreciate life's joys, both small and great, as they gain compassion and empathy for others. I feel grateful to be a part of their journey; I feel grateful for the lessons the students teach me, and I feel grateful to be a part of a community that values all of these essential aspects of education. Rylee Meints inspires me, knowing she will be a force for much good in our world.

Laurajane Van Niman

I have always believed that the best way to prepare my students for the future is by getting to know who each of my students are and helping them find what their passion is. My goal is to give them the tools they need to feel confident in their abilities and voices, and that they will use these talents to pursue their passions and see that learning is a lifelong journey.

Colleen Chapoton

We live in an amazing world. As a science teacher, I have the incredible fortune to watch students develop an appreciation for this dynamic planet that we call home. Hannah Glass-Chapman is one of the most caring students I have ever worked with. She is creative, inquisitive, joyful, and compassionate. Robert Isacksen puts a smile on my face every day with his warmth, humor, intelligence, integrity, and kindness. Both Hannah and Robert are exceptional learners. They are strong, thoughtful, diligent in their endeavors, mature, and caring. I am so proud of the effort they put into Honors Biology and AP Biology, but I am even more proud of the positive influence they have on our community. Congrats, kiddos! You are remarkable!

James Schafer III

Lead yourself first, before you lead others.

Shannon Houtrouw

Congratulations 2019 Excellence In Education Scholars! After working with you for three years, it is hard to let you go. I wish I could adopt you. I very much look forward to all that you will accomplish and I hope you will keep in touch from time to time and let me know how you are doing. You guys are going to be successful in whatever you do. You also happen to be the best computer science students in Michigan and among the best in the country. God Bless!

Russ Juni

I've enjoyed teaching, mentoring and talking to Jordan over the past four years. She excels with anything that is presented in front of her. I try to encourage and push all my students to think critically, problem solve and understand how these will be helpful to them. Jordan has excelled in those areas. I love to see her get excited about learning something new and see her dive into the concepts. Jordan has worked hard and sacrificed a lot the past four years and deserves all the recognition that she is now receiving...

Russ Juni

...As a Mathematics Teacher, I am excited that Jordan plans to pursue Mathematics/Statistics at Central Michigan University. This award means a lot to me because it comes from a student whom I have the utmost respect for.

Bill Klinestecker

As an educator, you want to think that every student is sitting in class hanging on to every word you say and that when you finish talking, they ask for more. Although that would be amazing, there are few students that actually come close to fitting that description. Caleb was one of those students. I do understand that he didn't hang onto every word, but he did always want more. Caleb was the student that asked those questions at the end of a lesson that told you he was listening. He asked the questions that took the lesson to the next level. He also loved being in the advanced math class I set up for a few students who mastered the unit being taught.

Bill Klinestecker

... It was always a goal of his to test out of the next math unit so he could be pushed by learning high levels of algebra, or problem solving.

Not to over look Caleb's social skills, he was a very popular classmate who seemed to get along with almost everyone. I remember hearing about the basketball games during recess. He was also one of the students I could ask to help out a struggling student with pretty much any subject.

To sum this all up, the world needs more Calebs.

