



2022

Student Comments on Significant Educators

Doug Robinson



“Doug Robinson or, as the students call him, D Rob., has taught math classes at Climax for almost 40 years. He is the best teacher I have ever had in the past twelve years of my grade school experience. He truly cares about his students and goes above and beyond to help them understand and excel in his courses. Sadly, D Rob. has decided this year will be his last, he is going to retire and move on to the next stage of his life. I feel bad for the underclassmen because they will never know what an amazing teacher D Rob. truly is.”

— **Haylee Hotchkiss**

Ryan Warner



“I have had Mr. Warner for at least one class in all four years of high school, so I have spent more time learning from him than any other teacher. His teaching style resonates well with me, and I always feel comfortable going to him with any questions I might have.”

– **Domenic Putti**

Traci Spada



“Mrs. Spada was my math teacher from Sophomore to Senior year, the longest I have had a single teacher throughout high school. She is always kind and shows that she cares about her students, asking about their day, weekend plans, and showing interest in students lives outside of just high school. She has always done everything within her ability to help her students with whatever they may need. While I have certainly had other great teachers Mrs. Spada has shown the biggest impact on my educational career and that is why she is my choice of significant educator.”

— **Jacob Rooney**

Scottie Walker



“Mr. Walker has taught me the value of working hard, as well as how to lead people efficiently. He has provided me the opportunity to make music, which is something that I enjoy.”

– **David Harris**

Modhi Alshehri



“I can truly credit Mr. Alshehri with instilling in me a love for math. I remember when I first took his class sophomore year and quickly found myself drowning in the content. He was very adamant about helping me. Mr. Alshehri took many hours out of his week to help solidate my understanding of the material and guide me through homework problems I was struggling with. My favorite thing about Mr. Alshehri’s classes is the passion and intelligence with which he teaches. While I could find myself counting down the minutes until I could leave other classes, I was always excited to go to my math class. I could tell Mr. Alshehri loved what he was teaching, and that made me love what I was learning. It is because of his classes that I am pursuing a degree in engineering.”

– **Alexandria French**

Peter Santa Maria



“Mr. Santa Maria is the best teacher I have had throughout my education. His passion for his students is unparalleled. I thank Mr. S for his constant availability and his mastery of teaching extremely challenging and rigorous AP Chemistry content. But above all, I thank Mr. S for instilling a love for solving complex science problems, leaving me doubt that I want to start my premedical journey next year. Mr. S has made a profound impact on me and I know that he has done the same for a countless number of my peers and for those who have already graduated and had the pleasure of having him as their educator.”

– **Jack Markillie**

Andrea Hudson



“Ms. Hudson has been an invaluable mentor over the past few years, and she's consistently gone above and beyond to support me in and out of the classroom. I've really enjoyed taking her Accounting classes, and she's also been my DECA coach for the past three years. Ms. Hudson is a patient, perceptive, enthusiastic teacher and she was dedicated to helping me learn everything I could when budget cuts shut down my Excel Certification program, she called in favors and overcame numerous technical difficulties so I could take my exam and earn my Microsoft Office Specialist certification. She places an emphasis on real-world skills that will help me in my future career, and she's helped me gain confidence in my presentation and problem-solving skills. Because of Ms. Hudson, I'm a stronger student and leader. I'm so blessed to have been her student!”

– **Johanna VanLandegent**

Andrea Hudson



“Ms. Hudson has been one of the most influential teachers that I have had the privilege of learning from during my high school education. She has been instrumental in my development as not only a business student, but as a leader in the school as well. Her devotion to enriching the minds of students is astounding, and she creates an interactive and exciting environment in the classroom. She has provided me with so many opportunities in which I have grown my business knowledge and skills, such as the Gull Lake Spirit Shop and the Youth Entrepreneurs curriculum. Not only was I taught how to thrive in the business world, but how to persevere when faced with challenges and hold an optimistic outlook on life. I will forever be grateful for her hard work and dedication she has put into her classes, DECA, and our school store.”

– **Anna Wozniak**

David Peters



“Mr. Peters has been my band director for the past seven years. Throughout this time, he has been encouraging and enthusiastic towards my success as a musician. Mr. Peters has always challenged my musical abilities and has had a great influence on the musician and person that I am today. Additionally, he has provided many opportunities to develop my leadership skills. I am grateful for his desire for all of his students to achieve success, and I am thankful for the passion for music that he has helped instill in me!”

– **Mitchell Eastman**

Colleen Chapoton



“Although I had always enjoyed science as a subject, Mrs. Chapoton's biology class was the first time that I remember being truly excited about a science class itself. Along with a clear passion for biology, Mrs. Chap brought an incredible positive energy to her teaching that made each class a joy to be in. Her teaching style made learning even difficult and confusing topics straightforward as well as fun, and I knew that if I had any questions, she'd be happy to answer them, even if they weren't in the curriculum. Biology freshman year and AP biology senior year with Mrs. Chapoton have been two of my favorite classes at KAMSC, and if it weren't for Mrs. Chap and her classes, I don't think I'd be considering biology as a potential college major. I'm incredibly grateful to Mrs. Chapoton and everything she's done for my educational and personal journey through high school.”

– **Dominick Frost**

Laura Citino



“Ms. Citino encouraged genuine, thought-provoking discussions of our texts. In a rigorous academic environment, she cared not about our grades, but about helping us learn. She focused on stimulating her students’ critical thinking as opposed to monotonous busy work and kept their mental wellbeing in mind. Her care and expertise made her class the best that I have taken.”

– **Alyssa Park**

Shannon Houtrouw



“Mr. Houtrouw is the teacher that got me hooked on computer science. I have been his student for almost 3 years now and I have witnessed how he always pushes his students to attend coding competitions and tackle tough problems on their own. I don't think I would have become so interested in computer science if it were not for him.”

– **Anthony Alvarez**

Rex Hafer



“Mr. Hafer is not only an amazing teacher, but he also helps his students with their own issues. He is always happy to help with anything a student lays forward and asks for help with.”

– **Michael Ankley**

Shay Wintz



“Mrs. Wintz has been an important mentor in the last two years of high school, not only educationally, but also personally. While somehow managing to be an exceptional teacher online, she taught me a vital life skill, how to write a great essay. She has consistently pushed me to reach my potential, and her steady expression of belief in my skills helped build my own personal confidence. Mrs. Wintz was also very significant in my life with some struggles that I, as well as so many others, faced during Covid. She has been such a reliable, engaged, and dedicated teacher, someone I will always look up to.”

– **Sophie Canfield**

Shay Wintz



“Mrs. Wintz has been my teacher since freshman year. In these past four years we have had a strong bond unlike any other teacher I have had. She has guided me through all my years in high school and has helped me through tough decisions unlike any other teacher. She has been supportive and beneficial to my academic success just as much as anyone else. Mrs. Wintz has a bigger heart than anyone I know. She is extremely passionate in her line of work. With that being said, Mrs. Wintz is simply the best candidate for this award!”

– **Noah Kuhnert**

Kelly Schultz



“Dr. Schultz is in charge of the ATYP program and also teaches computer science at ATYP. The program was instrumental in helping me develop academically. When I took computer science, I found that I had an interest in the subject. Dr. Schultz made the topic interesting and easy to understand. She is an excellent teacher.”

– **Mollie McDonald**

Colleen Chapoton



“Mrs. Chapoton is an incredible teacher. Her classroom is a safe and welcoming space. Her class is always a highlight of my day. Her enthusiasm for science and learning has inspired me to study biology.”

– **Olive Tatara**

Al Nieboer



“From the start of my freshman year, Mr. Nieboer has been instrumental in my interest in the sciences. Not only did he push me to achieve with his famous line: 'You cut corners, I cut points,' he also recruited me for academic extracurriculars like the Kalamazoo Christian High School Quiz Bowl team and the Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics, and Science problem-solving team. Inside the classroom, Mr. Nieboer clearly cared about his students' conceptual understanding of all the subjects he taught, and he presented information in ways that developed life skills I'll be able to use in the future, during and after my education. Thank you so much to Mr. Nieboer for constantly being a phenomenal science teacher and a strong example of a Christian educator.”

– Sara Bussey

Michael Sinclair



“Mr. Sinclair challenged me to combine physics and creativity and to take on challenging projects. His classes have not only taught me more about how our world works, but how to identify objects, collaborate with other groups, and skills I can take with me through life.”

– **Celia Baublis**

Claire Beougher



“Ms. Citino has been my teacher for two years, and throughout my education I have never known a better teacher than her. Her classes are fun and engaging, and through them I have learned so much about the world and about myself. I don't know who I would be without her lessons on Marxism, cyborgs, and the complicated philosophies behind the Matrix. She has given me inspiration, passion, and a hilarious story about attempting to provide first-aid to a dying bee. She has earned the title of being my Significant Educator several times over. Thank you for everything Ms. Citino.”

– **Celia Baublis**

Kristin Antoniotti



“I met Ms. Antoniotti two years ago when I was enrolled in her Spanish class. Ms. Antoniotti has been a great teacher, mentor, and friend. She has helped me learn to explore the world, learn about myself as a person, and is someone I can talk to about my life. She has been an invaluable part of my life and I am very grateful to have had her as my teacher.”

– Owen Davis

Michael Sinclair



“I have had Mr. Sinclair for three of my four years at KAMSC and he is one of the most dedicated and inspiring teachers I have ever had. His lessons are both entertaining and informational and I always look forward to going to his classes. He has taught me that learning is more than good grades, it's about critical thinking, challenging yourself, and having a genuine curiosity of the world. He has encouraged me and helped me adjust to both high school as a freshman and prepare for college as a senior. He is passionate about everything he teaches and cares about the success of all of his students. Mr. Sinclair has had an immense positive impact on my life and I am so grateful to have had him as my teacher.”

– **Evan Teal**

Atiba Ward



“Mr. Ward has been a standout educator in my educational career. He is not hesitant to go out of his way when he sees a student who needs some extra help in his classroom. Mr. Ward makes learning a fun experience and teaches tactical skills that can be used outside of the classroom. In my high school career, he has presented me with so many opportunities and opened so many doors for me. I am so grateful that I was able to experience the gift of working with such a great person. The work that he does day in, and day out is outstanding. Mr. Ward is a teacher that is authentic and keeps it real with his students, which is rare in this day and age. Overall, Mr. Ward has made a great impact on my educational journey and has motivated me to become the best version of Chanel.”

– **Chanel Wilson**

Colleen Chapoton



“Ms. Chapoton is an amazing teacher of both biology and life skills. Her freshman biology class prepared me for the challenges I would face at KAMSC and beyond. She taught me how to study, stay organized, manage my time, and grow from failure. She is one of the most kind and caring people I know but won't hesitate to push you out of your comfort zone and force you to grow and adapt. I have learned so much from Ms. Chap and wouldn't be anywhere near as prepared for the future without her.”

– **Elijah Sanders**

Jennifer Billington



“Mrs. Billington's teaching sparked and encouraged my interest in science. Whenever having a class with Mrs. Billington, it was always the best part of my school day. She has always made sure to go the extra mile in order for her students to enjoy learning about everything on the curriculum. Regardless how much the topics we were learning about interested students, she always made everyone excited for class.”

– **Emiline Thorne**

Colleen Chapoton



“Mrs. Chap is the person who made me want to pursue a career in neuroscience. Her infectious love for biological sciences inspires enthusiasm wherever she teaches, and I fell in love with biology and research in her class. She completely changed how I approach science, teaching me how to embrace the complexity and slight chaos that makes life interesting.”

– **Genevieve Kim**

Ann Alburtus



“Though long nights trying finishing the next Wuthering Heights reading and hair-pulling scares on going over the word limit of essays come to mind when thinking about my time in Mrs. Alburtus' class, perhaps the most memorable one was discovering the concept of 'Yes, and...' It had been first introduced to us as an activity to catalyze another deep-dive into Harper Lee's characterization of Scout in To Kill A Mockingbird; however, it became a concept implemented throughout our journey through her class and is something that I strive for outside of the classroom as well. I realized that yes, I love playing the violin AND using my passion for music to impact the community around me.

Continued

Ann Alburtus



“Yes, I love science AND experimenting with different mediums of communicating these ideas. And yes, I am a student who moved from Houston, Texas my freshman year, AND one who has gotten the privilege of embracing every opportunity afforded to me to engage with different cultures, to test my views with those who see the world differently, and to celebrate the often-hidden differences here in Kalamazoo that make us stronger.”

– Patrick Li

Elizabeth Honeysett



“Mrs. Honeysett was my art teacher during my junior and senior years of high school and the three different classes I had with her were always one of my favorite parts of the day. Even though I don't plan on majoring in art in college, I still think I gained a lot from taking her classes. In particular, taking Technology, Engineering and Creativity last semester taught me so much about problem solving, teamwork and how to use power tools. She also helped me become a lot more confident in trying new things, in art as well as in other areas. Taking her class brought me joy every day and it was one of the things that kept me going during virtual school my junior year. Mrs. Honeysett is one of the teachers I will truly miss when I go to college, and I am incredibly grateful to have had her as my teacher.”

– **Hannah Longcore**

Tyler Baas-Peterson



“Mr. Baas was my English teacher my sophomore and junior year, and, without him, I would not enjoy English like I do today. He made the class so much more fun and interactive and had me engaged in every book, lesson, and class. He also helped inspire me to write more creatively and become a better writer overall. This has partly inspired to pursue a career of law, where I am looking at and analyzing written works, which has been taught to me by Mr. Baas.”

– **Brendan Semler**

Laura Citino



“It is very difficult for me to adequately express the amount of growth and enjoyment I have received from Ms. Citino and the discussions within her classes. Class was an environment in which my confidence in myself and my ideas flourished, and the community of like students reinforced a courage that I never knew I had. Ms. Citino is an educator like no other in both influencing and impassioning students.”

– **Tanmay Shekhar**

James Hemenway



“I owe Mr. Hemenway my deepest gratitude. He has been a confidant for my career through countless, hour-long discussions about wealth management and its many different routes. Because of him, I have learned about how I can pursue my career path and gained insight into the field of business. He is kind-hearted, passionate about business, and has a humorous persona. He has a way of engrossing me in conversations about stocks, his job, and business that makes an hour seem like five minutes. Mr. Hemenway has given me an opportunity to intern with him at his firm this summer to learn more about financial advising for this opportunity among other things, I will be forever grateful for his impact on my life.”

– **John Wang**

Jessica Clark



“Ms. Clark has been an inspiration for me as a female student pursuing a STEM career, modifying International Baccalaureate biology curriculum for the virtual platform and mentoring my extended essay process. As her student, I appreciate how she prioritizes learning while balancing family in this challenging pandemic. Feedback on my topic of research, representation and retention of women in STEM, was invaluable and relevant to her own experience as a science teacher raising young twins in a pandemic.”

– **Emma Cavalli**

Sean Brennan



“Mr. Brennan has been an incredible orchestra teacher for my entire high school career. He always takes so much care to give students agency to improve themselves or the orchestra as a whole. Whether he is asking for input on musical decisions or encouraging us to share affirmations about our peers, he truly cares about all of his students, and it really shows. He has given me so many leadership opportunities and I am so grateful to have had him as a teacher.”

– **Astrid Code**

Colleen Chapoton



“Since I began school, I have been my harshest critic, and I have always worked for high grades and perfect test scores. Mrs. Chap has taught me that grit and quality of work are always more important than grades. Her teaching reflects her passion for biology, and she often shows her excitement during class. During our time together, Mrs. Chap never had an off day, and she would always share jokes about biology or plan small but engaging activities. When activities became more serious, whether it was an unbelievably stressful lab practical as our first examination, or a 20-minute group presentation, Mrs. Chap has put me out of my comfort zone. While uncomfortable at first, it has taught me valuable skills concerning studying, time management, and even leadership. My time with her made me feel prepared for the rest of high school, and I will carry many of her teachings into college and my career.”

– **Viktors Kalnins**

Krista Hovestadt



“Mrs. Hovestadt has been a critical part of my high school experience from the time that I was a freshman. In addition to being an amazing counselor who took care of any concerns I had; she also was incredibly kind outside of school. She routinely gave me advice about academic and life problems and was one of the most important people when it came to preparing for the college application process. I'm grateful that I've had the chance to get to know her and her amazing family.”

– **Vikas Tatineni**

Sean Brennan



“I've had Mr. Brennan as a teacher for all four years of high school, and he's really helped me to not only improve as a musician but also as a person. He genuinely believes in and cares about all his students, and always prioritizes their well-being over grades and deadlines. He is incredibly passionate about what he teaches and works hard to give all his students an equal opportunity to succeed. Mr. Brennan's orchestra has always been a fun, welcoming community that I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of.”

– **Zoe Thomas**

Jacqueline Pora



“Senora Pora is a significant educator because she pushes her students to excel. In her class, I was challenged to speak Spanish constantly, and learned how to collaborate well with other students. As an individual, she has also shown time and time again that she truly cares for her students. Though I graduated from her class a few years ago, she continues to be available and offer support to my family and me.”

– **Audrey Wells**

Lynelle Schreuder



“She has taught me since 7th grade and cares about her students' personal lives as well as their education.”

– **Meghan Wykstra**

Doug Flynn



“Mr. Flynn is always kind to everyone, and all students look forward to his class. He is respectful and knows how to educate with a sense of humor. He does a lot for the community and the school. Mr. Flynn has always been supportive of my athletic and academic endeavors and has encouraged me to be the best in everything I do.”

– **Tyler DeGroote**

Amanda Szczesny



“I have had Mrs. Szczesny for three years, going through the AP Capstone program and taking AP Psychology with her. Whether she is teaching psychology or a research class with a broader scope of what individuals are learning, Mrs. Szczesny often provides unconventional teaching methods that encourage students to gain a deeper understanding of topics beyond simple memorization of terms and concepts. She always supports individual and group learning which allowed me to pursue the areas in which I was particularly interested while also ensuring that I was learning all of the things necessary for me to succeed. I will always be grateful for the opportunities that Mrs. Szczesny has given me access to during my time in high school and am sure that I will be able to employ the skills that she has taught me throughout the rest of my life.”

– Owen Bishop

Amanda Szczesny



“I have had Mrs. Szczesny as a teacher three years in a row for AP Seminar, AP Research, and now AP Psychology. Her Seminar and Research classes have taught me, more than any other class, to be more independent and responsible regarding my schoolwork. She has helped me to become a better problem solver and time manager.”

– **Grace Johnson**

Kristina Porter



“As a chemistry and AP chemistry teacher, Ms. Porter acted as an excellent educator that not only taught the material well but challenged my skills and work ethic while being engaging to improve me as a student and person. She always helps students, whether it be chemistry or life in general, and in that way, she is an excellent role model. She has greatly reinforced my love for science in general and is a major contributor to my determination in my future studies.”

– **Andrew Painter**

Kristina Porter



“Mrs. Porter is a truly exceptional teacher. Everyday was a joy to walk into her class from sophomore year all the way up to senior year. A whole 3 years! She made my love of science into a full on prospective future career in chemistry. She made hard and difficult topics into ones that I could understand. She is one of the few teachers that understands what the students are going through on a daily basis and how to help them. I enjoyed taking chemistry and AP chemistry so much with her, that I decided to take an Independent Study over Organic Chemistry. You can tell how much she truly loves the subject that she teaches and getting to know students on a personal level. For these reasons, Mrs. Porter is a significant educator and mentor in my life.”

– **Gage Stenger**

