

North Branch Area Schools “Person of the Week”

Welcome to our NBAS Person of the Week! Each week, we highlight a member of our incredible team to showcase their unique contributions and share a bit about their journey. This week, we’re shining the spotlight on Bethany Cordle, a Social Studies teacher at North Branch High School.

Bethany Cordle brings history to life in ways that inspire curiosity and critical thinking in every student. Her classroom is a place of discovery, respectful dialogue, and empowerment—where students are not only learning about the world, but also learning how to shape it.

Bethany’s dedication to our students is commendable, and we want to express our gratitude for her continuous work to improve their education.

Bethany’s Story:



I was truly shocked when I received the email regarding “NBAS Person of the Week.” I never thought my daily routine of calling every student “sunshine” and having an unbridled excitement for history was nomination worthy, but here we are, and I am very humbled and appreciative of the nomination.

This year will mark my third-year teaching. North Branch was the first school that I applied to, and I was shocked when I was called for an interview and beyond words when they called and offered me my first teaching position. I had always wanted to be a teacher; however, life had other plans for me. I dropped out of high school and went right into the workforce. Going back to school a little at a time whenever life allowed. Finally, I was able to obtain my bachelor’s degree and was accepted into the accelerated teaching program at SVSU. I will forever be grateful to Mark Hiltunen, John Sherman, and Jim Marshall for taking a chance on me.

I have had the privilege of guiding students through the epic adventures of World History, American History, AP World History, and my beloved Military History. I also moonlight as the girls' golf coach as well as one of the sponsors for the Class of 2027.

To be perfectly honest, I never heard of North Branch until I applied. I grew up downstate, going to high school in Ypsilanti. I had only recently moved to Vassar with my daughter a few years earlier. Let me say the culture shock from living in the city to moving up here was eye opening, but the biggest shock was my first Farmer Day at NBHS. Let’s just say the sheer number of tractors in the parking lot let me know North Branch was different, but I knew I was going to like it here.

My favorite aspect of working at NBAS is the autonomy. Having an administrator like Doug Lindsay who does not question my sanity when I request 300+ peeps for a “really awesome project I want to do.” Having a colleague like Joe Mitchell, who not only listens to my bizarre brainstorms but also actively participates in the chaos, resulting in Peep-A-Palooza. My brief time in the classroom has taught me that teaching is like a snowflake - no two approaches are exactly alike. I’m so grateful that NBAS allows me the freedom to teach authentically, bringing my personality and teaching from my whole heart, making learning a delightfully unique adventure for me and my students.

My favorite part of the job? It is definitely the initial wide-eyed terror my students exhibit when I announce a new project. It’s like watching a baby deer caught in the headlights. But then, the magic happens! They complete the project and are beaming with pride to show it off, strutting around like they just invented the light bulb. It’s a roller coaster of emotions, and I’m just here to sell the tickets.

If I could give myself some advice on my first day of teaching, it would be “Don’t lose the flowers through the weeds.” This was advice Mary Sherman gave me halfway through my first year of teaching when I was having a hard time. I reflect on her words daily. On my drive home, I look for that one positive flower through all the weeds. Some days, I can find a field of roses, and other days, I can only find one dandelion. Either way, that delicate flower lets me know that I had a positive impact, no matter how small. It also gives me the inspiration and motivation to make a difference in the lives of many.

While I can think of numerous people who deserve this honor before me, I truly appreciate the recognition.

Here is what some of her co-workers had to say...

- Since Bethany has joined the high school she has been a real asset. Bethany relates to kids while being firm and respectful. She has high expectations for students and a real talent for making them want to reach those goals. Moreover, she is super creative in her teaching. She finds ways for students to be very hands on in projects that enhance content in history. She doesn't just do this once in a while; when one project ends, another begins. She is super motivated to make learning creative. Bethany is also willing to take on activities and learning opportunities above and beyond the school day and she is always up for a challenge. I envy her motivation and enthusiasm for teaching. I think she's the best thing NBHS has seen in a while.
- Bethany has made a significant impact on North Branch High School. She constantly looks for new and interesting projects and teaching methods to engage our students. Bethany is pushing to add rigor to our courses and higher-level offerings to our students to help push them in their learning. Bethany's no-nonsense style and honest approach bring an openness to the relationship with her students that makes students want to be part of her classes. Her now famous use of, "Good morning, Sunshines" is known by all

of her students and makes a connection with them. It has been a pleasure working with Bethany, getting to know her, and I am looking forward to all of the out-of-the-box ideas that she will be working on to help push our students' success in the future.

- Bethany is a creative, no-nonsense educator that wants her students to succeed. She has a great rapport with her students and pushes them to excel both in class and in their futures.

Thank you, Bethany, for being such a vital part of our school community. Please join us in celebrating her well-deserved recognition!