

## 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 Mark Brown, Director of Technology for North Branch Area Schools.

We would like to recognize and sincerely thank Mark for his outstanding leadership and dedication. Mark’s vision and expertise has played a crucial role in advancing our district’s digital learning, ensuring our students and staff have the tools and support they need to thrive. His commitment to innovation, security, and accessibility continues to make a lasting impact—thank you Mark, for all that you do!

### Mark’s Story:



**How long have you worked for NBAS?** I have worked at North Branch Area Schools since I graduated from High School in 2000.

**In a few sentences, briefly describe your role(s) at NBAS.** As the Director of Technology, I lead the charge in ensuring that our students and staff have the cutting-edge technological resources they need to thrive at North Branch Area Schools. My role involves overseeing all aspects of our IT infrastructure, from secure networks to reliable devices, making sure technology transforms how we teach and learn, unlocking new potential for every student and staff member across the entire district.

**What has been your favorite part of working here? What aspect of your job do you find most rewarding?** My favorite part of working here is undoubtedly the incredible team I get to collaborate with every day. I truly wouldn't be able to accomplish what I do without the dedication of our amazing 'Tech' team: Dan Brown, Amber White, and Laura Gleeson. Their hard work and collaborative spirit are what allow us to effectively implement new tools and systems. Seeing technology empower both students and educators is incredibly rewarding, and it's a success we achieve together, hand-in-hand with our dedicated teachers, administrators, and all staff across the district who embrace and leverage these tools.

**What is your proudest accomplishment during your time at the North Branch Schools or what is your favorite NBAS memory?** My proudest accomplishment is undoubtedly the implementation of our 1:1 student device program. This ambitious process began right at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, where we spent countless hours preparing Chromebooks to ensure every family that wanted one had the opportunity to use a device at home for virtual learning. As that school year ended, we solidified and rolled out a full 1:1 program the following

year. Getting devices into students' hands has been incredibly beneficial to learning, and I've seen firsthand how Chromebooks have positively transformed many aspects of teaching and learning—they've opened up new avenues for personalized instruction, facilitated collaboration, and made resources more accessible, truly empowering our students and staff in ways we hadn't seen before.

**What do you enjoy most about the North Branch community?** Having grown up here and spent my entire career at North Branch Area Schools, what I enjoy most is truly the feeling of home and belonging in this community. It's a place where I've seen generations grow, and I deeply appreciate the unwavering support everyone shows for our local schools and the strong bonds that tie us all together. That collective caring is especially visible in how the community rallies to help families in need, reflecting a genuine dedication to supporting everyone who calls North Branch home.

**What's one thing people don't know about you that they would be surprised to find out?** While my world revolves around technology, what truly surprises people is my deep love for hiking, especially when I get to do it with my family. There's nothing quite like hitting the trails together, getting completely unplugged, and experiencing nature firsthand. It's a perfect contrast to the digital world I work in, much like my enjoyment of cooking and, perhaps most surprisingly, getting lost in a good old-fashioned paper book – you know, the kind that needs no Wi-Fi and whose battery literally never dies.

**If you could have a superpower, what would it be and why?** If I could have a superpower, it would be the ability to instantly learn and master any new skill or piece of knowledge. In the world of technology, things change so fast, so it would be incredibly helpful to always be ahead of the curve.

**What piece of advice would you give to your younger self or others?** Embrace change and never stop learning – especially when it comes to technology. And for goodness sake, make sure you have more difficult passwords and don't make them all the same! You'll thank me later.

### **Here is what some of his co-workers had to say...**

- Mark Brown has wide-ranging hours and availability. He is extremely knowledgeable and creative when it comes to solving tech issues. He displays an incredible amount of patience with staff whether the situation has been MOJO'd or not. Overall, he is very pleasant to work with and I appreciate his positive attitude. He puts out a lot of fires all day but never seems to sweat it. He's a superhero.
- Mark Brown is nothing short of a hero in our district—our local tech wizard who approaches all he does with patience, genius, and an unmatched work ethic. He puts in countless hours keeping our systems online, solving problems big and small with

expertise and a smile. Whether rescuing us from technological disaster or actively developing our digital resources, Mark does it all with humility and grace. His depth of knowledge, regular availability, and sheer niceness make him an invaluable member of our team. In a nutshell, we couldn't do what we do without him—he's an absolute treasure and a pleasure to work with every single day.

- Mark is one of the most professional, hardworking colleagues I know. He works tirelessly to make our district a better place for our students, staff and community. Our district could not run more than a day or two without him! He is instrumental in keeping digital infrastructure going as well as problem solving and keeping all things tech updated, safe and working properly. That is no easy feat when you think about the technology we have amassed over the past few years - hundreds of desktops, iPads, phones, projectors, sound field systems, thousands of Chromebooks, BenQ boards, the ever-growing digital software, cameras, Centegix and more - as well as the infrastructure (e.g, servers that he works on \*every\* weekend, wifi). Mark is a wizard with Skyward, MiDataHub, Google Workspace and pretty much anything digital you put in front of him. He can solve problems like no one I've ever seen before. I can recall several occasions where he troubleshooted issues for the state and our testing vendors when they could not figure it out!

Ask anyone...Mark can be trusted and counted on. He will do anything to help out the district without hesitation (long days, evenings, weekends, you name it) but also any colleagues in need. Mark has this quiet charisma that people naturally gravitate to. He has this uncanny ability to address challenging issues with genuine care & calm in his approach. Mark's considerate and patient demeanor over the years has assisted him greatly when working with colleagues with the affordances and constraints that technology can bring. His name is synonymous with servant leadership and models for all of us daily the virtues of professionalism, patience, kindness, hard work and humility.

I predict Mark will be extremely reticent about this recognition since his mode of operation is to put his head down and just get things done...no accolades needed. He cares deeply about this school district and everyone within it. This phenomenal human is most deserving of this recognition.

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