



2021 Utah Teacher of the Year NOMINEES

Utah State Board of Education

Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee

Sandra Anderson

Sandra Anderson has been a social studies and business teacher at East Hollywood High School in West Valley City, Utah since 2015. East Hollywood High School is a Title I public charter school, serving the needs of at-risk students living within the Salt Lake valley and surrounding region. Anderson currently teaches 12th grade U.S. government and citizenship, 9th grade world geography, as well as accounting I & II, business communication I & II, and economics to students grades 10--12.

Prior to beginning her teaching career, Anderson worked in the accounting industry for over 20 years. After holding many accounting positions through the years, Anderson capping off her industry career as corporate accounting manager for a manufacturing corporation. Anderson holds an Associate of Applied Sciences in Accounting from the State University of New York, Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, New York.

To transition into education, Anderson combined her passion to teaching with an interest in history and her years of business expertise. In 2013 Anderson earned a Bachelor of Science in Social Studies Composite Teaching from Utah State University in Logan Utah, as well as a business and marketing core endorsement.

As Anderson enters into her 7th year of teaching, she is completing a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction in Social Studies from Concordia University in Seward Nebraska. Anderson anticipates a February 2021 competition of this graduate degree and she is looking forward to continuing to provide meaningful learning opportunities for her students for many years to come.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee

Kathy Ballard

Kathy Ballard, has served as teacher librarian at Monticello Academy in West Valley City since 2006. Since then, she has built a library and library program to support students and faculty. Using the Utah State Library Core as her guide, she teaches 675 students in all grades K-8 each week, focusing on research, reading engagement and media awareness. At Monticello Academy, Ballard is on faculty committees, oversees book fairs, literacy nights, plus her daily teaching schedule and librarian tasks. She is assisting with a new library at a satellite campus that opens in Fall 2020 in West Point, Utah.

Between 2003-2005 Ballard earned a master's degree in library science from Emporia State University. In fall of 2005 she learned of Monticello Academy, interviewed and was placed on the school parent founding committee as library chair. She was a public librarian in Salt Lake County from 2005-2006. She received her teaching certificate and license in 2013 through the Alternative to Licensing program at Salt Lake Community College, along with an endorsement for K-12 library media. In 2014-15, Ballard was on the State Library Standards Committee and from 2009-2016, Ballard served on the Utah Educational Library Media Association board.

Ballard has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Utah. (1983). She and her husband Brian Ballard, live in West Valley City, where they raised six children. Currently, Ballard is earning an English Language Learner endorsement to better serve the students of her school population.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee

Robert Banks

Robert Banks currently teaches 11th and 12th grade English at Delta High School in Delta, Utah, a position he has held for 19 years. Previous to his work at Delta High School, he taught Spanish and English his first year at Wendover High School and 12 years at South Sevier High School. Those first three years at South Sevier were shared at South Sevier Middle School where he taught English and Reading to 8th graders. He has taught every grade level of English 7-12. Also previous to Delta High School, he was the principal at Panguitch High School for two years. At both South Sevier High School and Delta High School, he coached boy's tennis for 28 years and girl's tennis for 24 years. Banks has been an educator for 34 years.

For the past 30 summers, he has worked for the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine as a PPQ technician. Banks has been an elected city councilman for Delta City since 2004.

Banks has a Masters degree in Secondary Education from Utah State University where he also earned his administrative/supervisory endorsement. His original Bachelor of Arts degree from Southern Utah State College included a Spanish major and an English minor, but he finished up his English major from Southern Utah University in 2009 so that he could teach English 1010 for Snow College at Delta High School, something he has done now for 10 years.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Randall Beach

Randall Beach teaches band and percussion students, grades 9–12 at Green Canyon High School in North Logan, Utah. Green Canyon's band program includes symphonic band, concert band, 2 percussion classes, jazz band, pep band, and marching band.

Randall holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Secondary Music Education from Utah State University and a Master's Degree in Percussion Performance and Pedagogy from Brigham Young University



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Danielle Beck

Dani Beck graduated from Utah Valley University with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, and later received a Master's in Instructional Design from Western Governor's University.

Currently Beck teaches fifth grade at Wasatch Elementary in Provo, Utah, and enjoys doing interactive simulations and hands-on projects with her students.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Michelle Berg

Michelle Berg is a fourth-grade teacher at Endeavour Elementary in Kaysville, Utah. Berg received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with an emphasis in mathematics from Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. She then went on to receive her English as a Second Language endorsement through Davis School District. Berg received her Masters of Arts in the area of Teaching with a Specialization in National Board-Certified Teacher Leadership from National University in La Jolla, California. Berg currently holds a level two Utah teaching license.

Berg has spent most of her life in the great state of Utah. Berg grew up in Kaysville, Utah and later moved to Bountiful Utah. Her mother and stepmother were amazing educators. They showed her the difference a great teacher can make in the lives of their students.

Education has been a part of her life since she was a little girl lining up her stuffed animals to teach them. She loves the opportunity to be an advocate for each of her students. It is an honor and a joy to inspire students to grow and dream. Berg constantly seeks to improve. Her students inspire her daily to be better and do better.

Berg enjoys sharing her passion for education with her two children. She hopes to instill a desire for learning within them and within all her students.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee

Blake Bockholt

Blake Bockholt graduated with his Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching at Brigham Young University in 2012. Four years later, he earned his Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction at the American College of Education.

Bockholt spent the first six years of his career teaching English and Advanced Placement classes at Fremont High school. He served for three years as a board member of Utah Council of Teachers of English (UCTE), and he has presented multiple breakout sessions at its annual conferences.

Currently, Bockholt teaches high school English and college writing courses at Northern Utah Academy of Math, Engineering & Science (NUAMES), which he affectionately calls "Teacher Utopia." Finally, Bockholt is a participant in the first-ever New York Times Teaching Project where he is developing his own curriculum project and collaborating with other educators across the country in creating new ways to teach with The Times.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Bethany Crowley

Bethany Crowley teaches 7th grade math at Ascent Academies of Utah, located in West Jordan, Utah. After earning her Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Utah, she decided that while she loves engineering and solving problems, what she loves most of all is teaching. She hopes to instill students with a love of math and all that goes with it--problem solving skills, logical thinking, and the confidence that comes from doing hard things.

In her free time, Ms. Crowley enjoys spending time with her family, reading, and going dancing. She is currently pursuing her Master of Education degree in Secondary Education through Utah State University.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Brad Evans

Brad Evans currently teaches middle school social studies at Bonneville Academy in Stansbury Park, UT. Mr. Evans has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from California State University, Los Angeles and a Bachelor of Science in Social Sciences from Southern Utah University. He was awarded a U.S. patent for his development of a neuromuscular coordination strengthening device. His teaching specialties include U.S. History, Global Politics, and World Civilization.

As an inventor and entrepreneur, Mr. Evans learned firsthand about the education and skills required to be successful in an increasingly automated and changing economy. He began substitute teaching in order to share his experiences and to help his students understand the importance of maximizing their individual talents and reaching their full potential. During his time as a substitute, Mr. Evans gained a real passion for education and decided to teach full-time. He brings enthusiasm, real-world experience, and the entrepreneurial spirit to the classroom. "I see social studies as the perfect vehicle for developing the critical thinking skill set our students will need to be prosperous throughout their lives."

Mr. Evans and his family enjoy spending time together hiking, camping, and fly-fishing.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Leah Everett

Leah Everett believes children thrive when engaged in cross-disciplinary learning activities that are relevant, meaningful, and fun. She brings curiosity and wonder about the natural world to her classroom of first and second-grade students at Treeside Charter School in Provo, Utah.

A life-long learner, Leah has a Bachelor of Science from Brigham Young University in Fashion Merchandising and loves to design and sew clothing and quilts and make a range of hand-crafted goods. She is a maker and loves working with her hands and believes that creating is good for the soul and brings this passion into the classroom.

She holds a certificate from the Utah State University Extension Master Gardener Program and loves to study plants interacting together in symbiotic relationships.

Cracking open geodes with rock hammers to learn about the rock cycle, measuring the growth of beans planted under lights inside the classroom, or crocheting during daily read aloud time are some of the ways she brings learning to life.



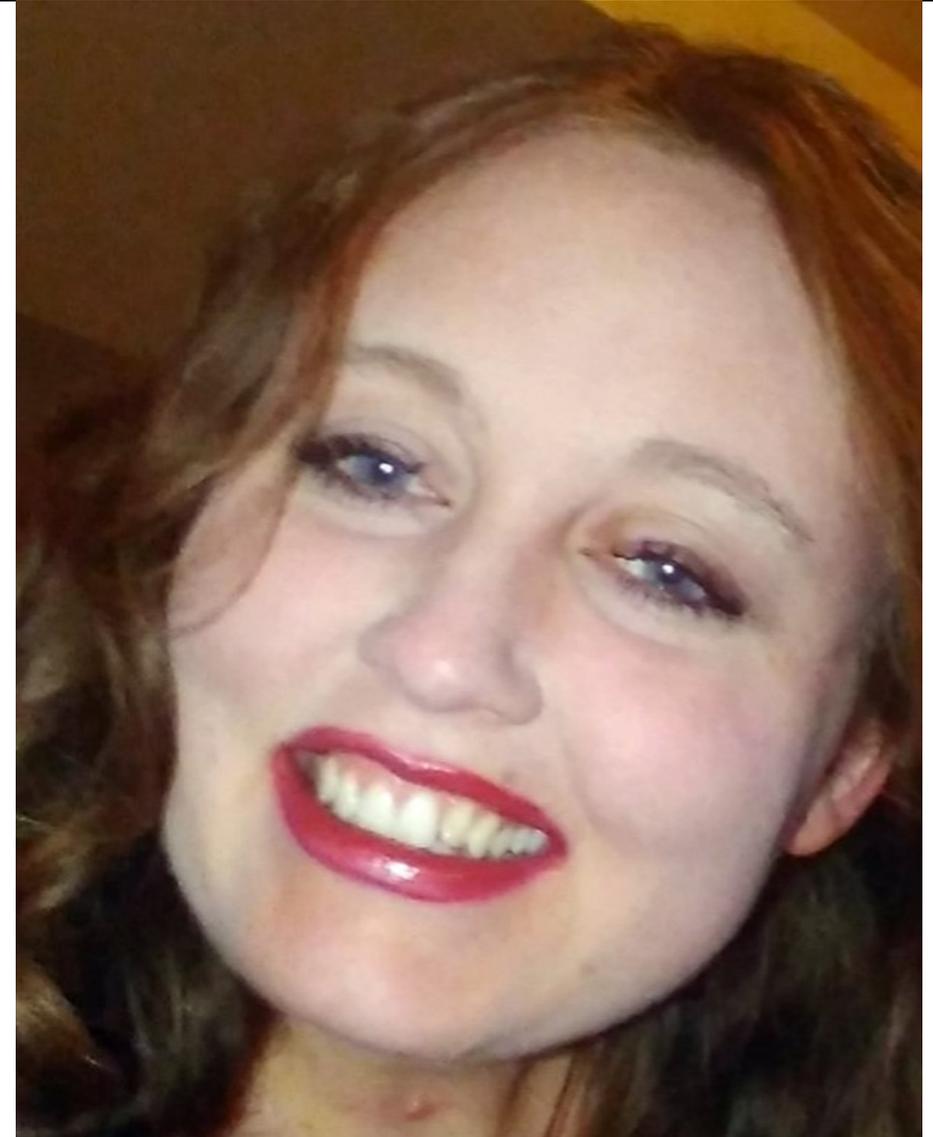
Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Lynette Gittins

Lynette Gittins is committed to developing happy lifelong learners. A graduate of Brigham Young University Idaho, Gittins has a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. She started teaching five years ago and is currently a 2nd grade teacher at Ogden Preparatory Academy in Ogden, Utah.

Gittins strongly believes that all students can learn. She reinforces positive behavior for all students through strong classroom management techniques, engaging lessons, and a sincere passion for education. Gittins knows each one of her students individually. She develops a strong understanding of their diverse strengths, weaknesses, and challenges and creates a classroom experience to ensure every student has success in the classroom and beyond.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Shari Griffin

Shari Griffin, has taught art education at Monticello High School, in Monticello Utah, since 2012. Ms. Griffin, teaches a variety of creative content to students from seventh through twelfth grade: art foundations one and two, photography, video production and digital media. Ms. Griffin, graduated in 2011 from the University of New Mexico with a Bachelors Degree in Art Education. Ms. Griffin did so, after shifting from a carrier with grassroots nonprofit organizations. Ms. Griffin is currently actively involved with the Monticello Parks and Beautification Committee, working on projects that beautify the community.

Ms. Griffin is a studio artist known as Shari Rene. Her gallery is by appointment only in Monticello, UT (artistsharirene@gmail.com). Ms. Griffin's philosophy is that "Art is not just about an artist's work; it is about expressing yourself through artistic discoveries."

Ms. Griffin has curated: The 2005 New Mexico's Capitol Holiday Tree in Washington DC "Artists extravaganza"; was a part of the Urban Forest Project with the City of Albuquerque, NM; The Youth Banner Project in Monticello, Utah "Life in San Juan County"; The Community Banner Project, "What Makes Monticello Beautiful to you"; Monticello High School's annual Christmas art show.

Ms. Griffin builds relationships with students by sharing her enthusiasm for self-discoveries. Ms. Griffin's goal is to help students understand that "attitude" reflects who they are and who they will become. Ms. Griffin empowers her student to never settle with "good enough" but rather "the best they can" because that is when wonderful discoveries take place.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee

Lisa Hammond

Lisa Hammond believes that the most important thing about teaching is relationships. She devotes her time at school building relationships with every student she teaches. Advising the HOPE squad is one avenue she uses. Lisa has worked with people in every developmental stage of life. She has taught fitness classes to special needs preschoolers, pregnant teens and young mothers, early college students, post cardiac patients and those who live with arthritis. She has coached swimming, volleyball and basketball. Lisa has spent a great deal of time with public middle and high school health and P.E. students.

She believes the more we know about our bodies and minds the better chance we have of living happy and fulfilled lives. Lisa also believes people can improve overall wellness and quality of life and tries to inspire everyone to move in any way that is possible for them.

Lisa has a Bachelor of Science degree in Health and a Master of Education emphasizing the use of technology in the classroom. She serves on the faculty advisory committee, safety committee, wellness committee, human sexuality education committee and is the diversity specialist at her school. Lisa has endorsements in physical education, geography, earth systems and integrated science.

Lisa is a naturalist who loves to hike, garden and read.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Tierca Harding

Tierca Harding is a middle school and high school teacher at Beehive Science and Technology Academy based in Sandy, Utah. She teaches 6th grade World History, 7th grade College and Career Awareness, 9th grade Spanish I, and 10th grade Spanish II. Harding has been at Beehive since 2015. Prior to joining Beehive, she was an English as a Second Language teacher in Tula, Mexico and a substitute for Utah schools working at Kelly Services.

Harding received her Bachelor's of Art degree from Brigham Young University. She has a level 2 license in Secondary Education with endorsements in Family and Consumer Sciences, Spanish, History, and English as a Second Language. Harding is an Apple certified teacher, and she has participated in the Beehive school transformation team leading the school in professional learning. She was also in charge of the yearbook at Beehive for 3 years and has piloted a VR program at Beehive allowing students to experience new opportunities for hands on learning.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Jodi Jorgensen

Jodi Jorgensen teaches third grade general education at Pony Express Elementary in Eagle Mountain, Utah. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from Utah Valley University in 1998.

Jorgensen has served as third grade Community Team Lead (CTL) for 6 years, attending meetings to collaborate with teachers and administrators to solve problems, involve community, and model leadership.

Jorgensen excels at making connections with students, coworkers and parents. She loves cultivating relationships that benefit children. She can be a leader and a follower. She works hard and will go the extra mile to help a child in need. She believes that collaboration is essential in working for the benefit of all kids and enjoy working with others on instruction, assessments, and remediation.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee

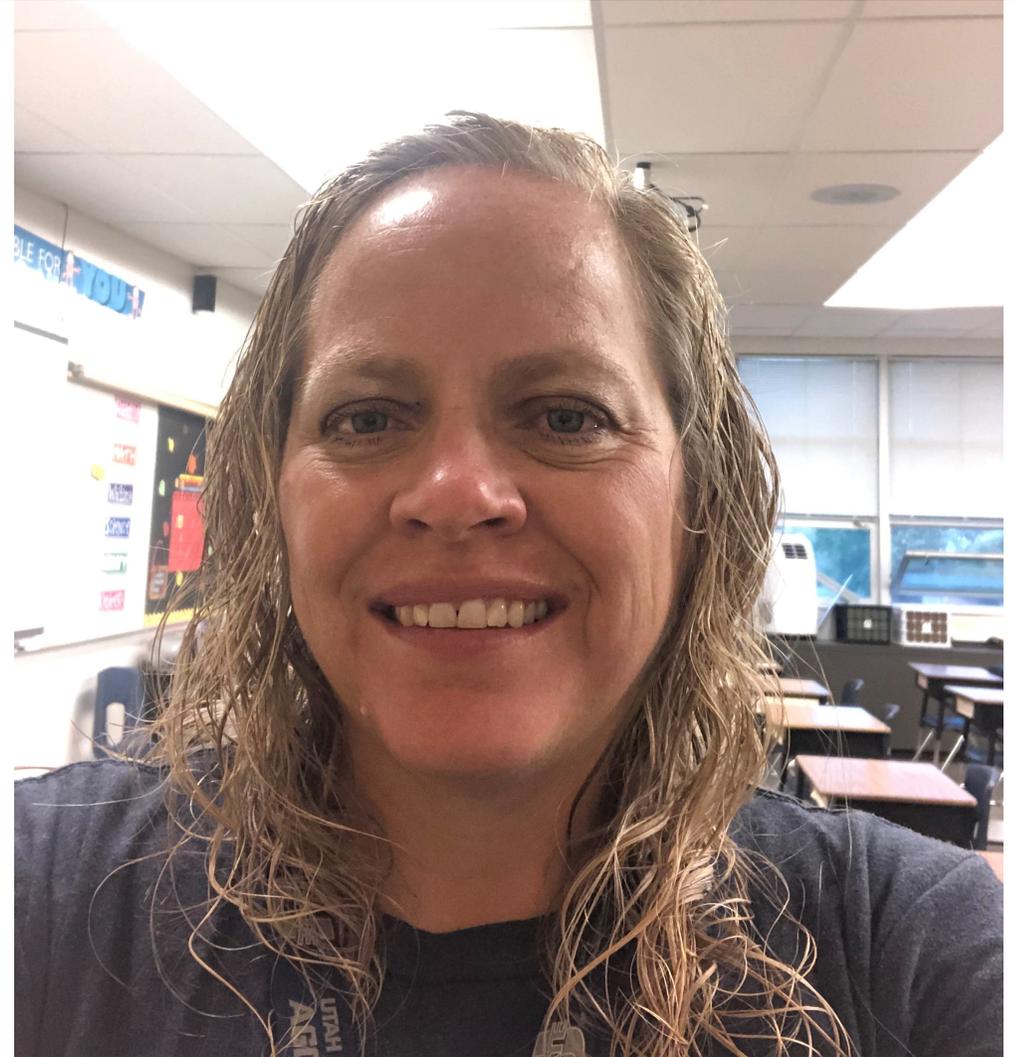


Lisa Kirby

Lisa Kirby has been teaching school in the Box Elder School District for 26 ½ years. She received a Bachelor's Degree from Utah State University in Elementary and Special Education and a Master's Degree from Weber State University in Curriculum Design.

Lisa currently teaches fifth grade at Three Mile Creek, in Perry. She knew at a young age that she wanted to be a teacher so that she could help others learn within their own unique skill sets and abilities. She believe all students can learn and achieve success in their schooling and can enjoy the process.

One of her greatest joys is when her students come back and visit her in her classroom and reminisce about the "good-ole days."



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee

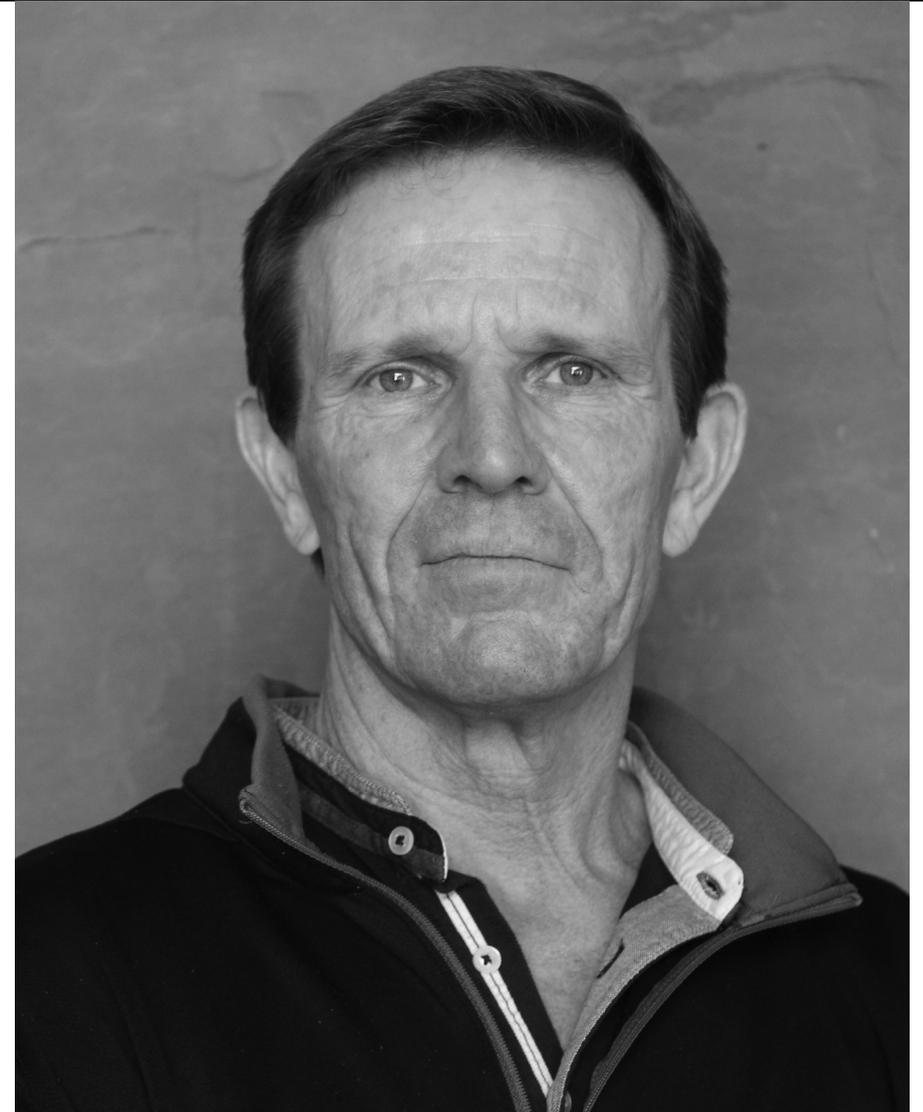


Kyle Lewis

Kyle Lewis has been a theatre educator in the state of Utah for 25 years. He received his BA in Theatre Education and English from Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. He went on to complete an MFA in Directing from Arizona State University's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts. His involvement included instruction from Gitta Honegger, Rachel Bowditch, David Barker, SITI Company, One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre, EL Teatro Campesino, and The Laboratory for the Development of Substitute Materials.

Prior to his return to academia, Kyle earned Actors' Equity Association affiliation (the labor union representing American actors and stage managers in theatre) and later was granted full membership to Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (the labor union representing American stage directors and choreographers).

Kyle has served as Creative Director for Theatre Arts Conservatory in Salt Lake City (2004-2012) and is a Lincoln Center Directors Lab Alum. He currently serves as the Artistic Director for Tuacahn High School for the Arts.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Jessica Lindley

Jessica Lindley has devoted her life to helping people with disabilities. She was blessed to be raised by a mother who was a special educator and also grew up with two brothers with Down syndrome. Because of her life experiences she knows firsthand the benefits of having a community team to support families with special children to succeed. She feels that her mission in life is to be a strong advocate for all students and to build on the core values of public education.

Lindley graduated from Southern Utah University with a double major in Elementary and Special Education. She went on to receive her Master's Degree in Educational Administration at Grand Canyon University. Lindley has been in education for 13 years while working in resource, self-contained classrooms, and mentoring new special education teachers. For the past four years she taught in an Initial Skills Classroom K-2nd grade for children with Autism at Foothills Elementary in Salem, Utah for the Nebo School District. Starting the 2020 School year, Lindley will be a full time Special Education Mentor.

Lindley takes great pride in being a leader in the world of education. She intentionally fosters relationships with all stakeholders to make great things happen; recognizing that a collaborative culture is the key to success for all.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Jessica Porter

Mrs. Jessica Porter teaches second grade at Grant Elementary in Murray, Utah. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Utah Valley University and a Masters of Education with an emphasis in curriculum design from Western Governors University. She earned her English as a Second Language endorsement in 2010.

Mrs. Porter began her career with an internship teaching third grade in the Alpine School District. The following year she took a position in the Murray School District and has been teaching in Murray ever since. She has taught first, second and third grades.

Mrs. Porter knows the importance of creating professional relationships with her students in order to help them become successful learners. She feels confident in the classroom and creates a positive learning environment while guiding her students to set and reach stretching goals and achieve excellence. She is dedicated to helping each individual child find their excellence.

Mrs. Porter lives in South Jordan, Utah with her husband, 3 stepchildren and 4 year old daughter. She plans on teaching for many years to come.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee

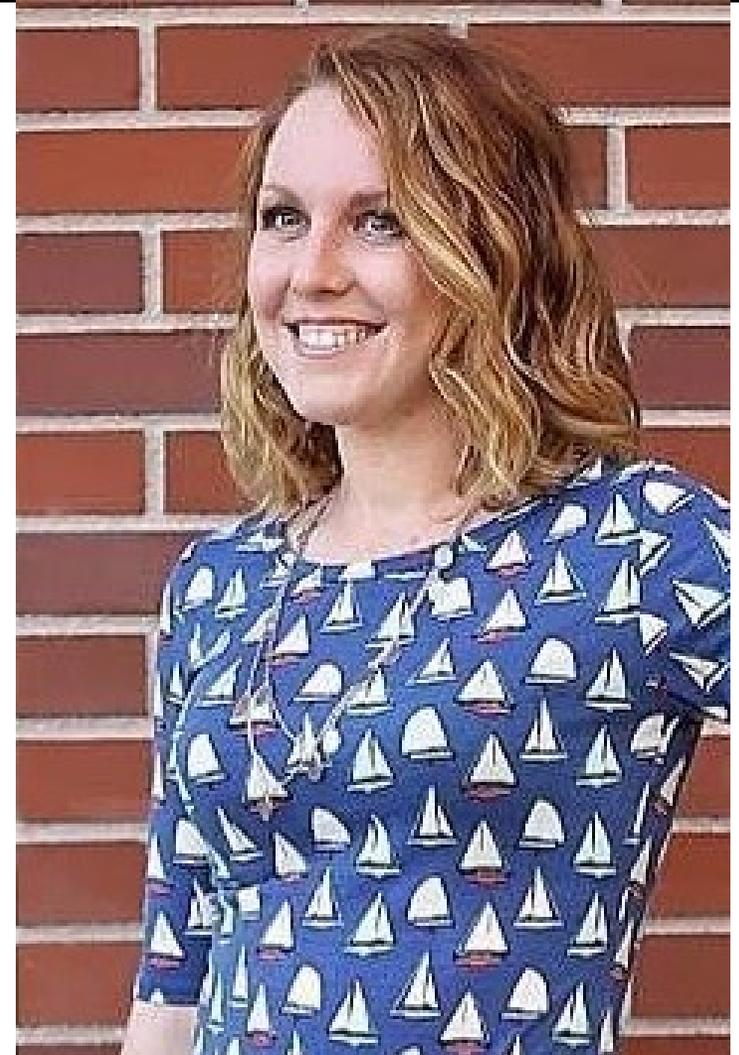


Kathryn Rawlins

Kathryn Rawlins is currently a sixth-grade science teacher at Scholar Academy Charter School in Tooele, Utah. Rawlins has taught a variety of grades over the course of her nine-year teaching career.

She always knew she wanted to be a teacher from a young age. She ran a theater club in middle and high school. Rawlins obtained her Elementary Education degree from Utah State University in 2011 while working as a reading aide at Millville Elementary. Her career began at Providence Elementary in 2011 where she did a one-year internship teaching first grade. In 2012 she was hired to teach second grade at Lincoln Elementary. During her six years at Lincoln Elementary she taught second and fourth grades, served as a PTA representative, helped to run the afterschool program, worked summer school, and served as a union representative. She worked closely with the special education team to meet the needs of each individual student. She was a teacher mentor to new teachers and had Utah State University Students in her classroom.

In 2016 Rawlins lost her husband to cancer. She continued to grow as a teacher throughout this trying experience. In 2018 her and her son relocated to Tooele and, she began teaching at Scholar Academy. Scholar Academy takes a unique approach to literacy and math by leveling their students. She was able to master a whole new level of teaching and really cultivate a love of learning from her students in this setting. Rawlins taught a split grade schedule during the 2018-2019 school year. She taught sixth grade literacy and fifth-grade science. She began the 2019-2020 school year as a fifth-grade teacher and shifted to sixth grade social studies and science mid-year. Rawlins served as a new teacher mentor and on the hiring committee during the 2019-2020 school year. She feels that her wide range of experience has made her a better teacher. She loves to think outside the box, runs a student-centered classroom and loves her job!



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Doug Schiffman

Douglas Schiffman teaches mathematics at Utah County Academy of Sciences (UCAS), Orem, Utah, grades 10, 11 and 12. Schiffman spent his childhood and teen years in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. Schiffman developed a love for math early on and he learned one of his most valued life lessons –to always do his best. Schiffman married his wife thirty-nine years ago. In his early adult life Schiffman was an owner/operator of a printing and publishing business. He ran his business for twenty years. During the time Schiffman operated his business, education remained important. Schiffman entered college as a Physics major and studied Physics through his junior year. He then switched majors and eventually earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Brigham Young University. Schiffman earned a Masters of Arts in Math Education from Western Governors University.

Schiffman has been in the adjunct faculty in the Developmental Math Department at Utah Valley University since 2000, and UVU's Math Department since 2017. He has taught at UCAS since January 2012. Schiffman believes his greatest strength as a teacher comes from his life experiences that occurred outside the classroom. He integrates these experiences into the lives of his students using the platform of mathematics. Inside his classroom, each day is a new adventure and new opportunity to further the students' understanding of mathematics and a new chance for Schiffman to learn from his students about their lives and their concerns in this ever-changing world.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Kathy Sherman

Kathy Sherman has had the great privilege of teaching in Logan City School District for 29 years. She currently teaches English as a Second Language at Ellis Elementary, in Logan, Utah, where she works with students who are from all around the world, in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Sherman received a Bachelor of Art, with a double major in Elementary Education and Spanish, from Utah State University. Her first-year teaching, she taught first grade in the mornings and Spanish at the middle school in the afternoons. She then taught second grade for 9 years. During this time, she received an ESL endorsement in 1997. In 2001, she moved to Ellis Elementary where she has been teaching ESL and running the After-School Club program for the past 19 years.

When Sherman began teaching ESL, a majority of her students spoke Spanish, with a small number of students speaking other languages. Ellis then began receiving refugee students. These students not only didn't speak English, but also came with little or no formal schooling. Sherman felt the need to help these students make up for lost time, and began a summer school program for the district, teaching literacy and English to refugee and immigrant children. She finds great joy in working with these students and their families, who are literally from all around the world! It has been a very rewarding experience to have hundreds of volunteers, AmeriCorps Vistas and district staff come together to educate these students!



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Erik Thompson

Erik Thompson has been teaching for 22 years in public school in Utah. He teaches sophomore health, all grades of physical education and is the head football coach and an Athletic Director at Ogden High School in Ogden Utah. For Coach Thompson teaching is in his blood both his parents were teachers and all his siblings teach. He loves teaching and coaching and feels it is more of a calling than a job.

Coach Thompson has a Bachelor of Arts from Weber State University, where he graduated in 1998. He also has certificates in driver & safety and health education.

His greatest accomplishment is being married to the lovely Skye Thompson for 17 years and has 3 boys: Kire 14, Jack 11 and Kale 8.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Wesley Thompson

If you were able to go back in time and ask Wesley Thompson what his career would be, he would never in a thousand years guess he would be a high school teacher. Luckily, through the experience of life, military, and education, he was able to find his true calling and is now "Living the Dream!" Thompson joined the United States Navy right after high school and has never looked back. After the Navy, he and his family moved home to Utah where Wes earned a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science Summa Cum Laude from Stevens-Henager College in Provo, Utah.

Thompson has been an educator in Carbon School District for 14 years and has taught over two-dozen different subjects. His experience, which ranges from nuclear power plant operation to web design and client services, has helped him to be a well-rounded instructor in the classroom. Thompson is currently a Career and Technical Education teacher at Carbon High School in Price, Utah, where he teaches general financial literacy, computer hardware/networking and real estate classes. He even helps coach debate.

Thompson eagerly welcomes the challenge of learning something new and helping diverse students from all backgrounds make and achieve their goals. Thompson comes from the philosophy that education is not just working hard to get grades on a page, it's learning how to create the life you want and helping all to achieve.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee

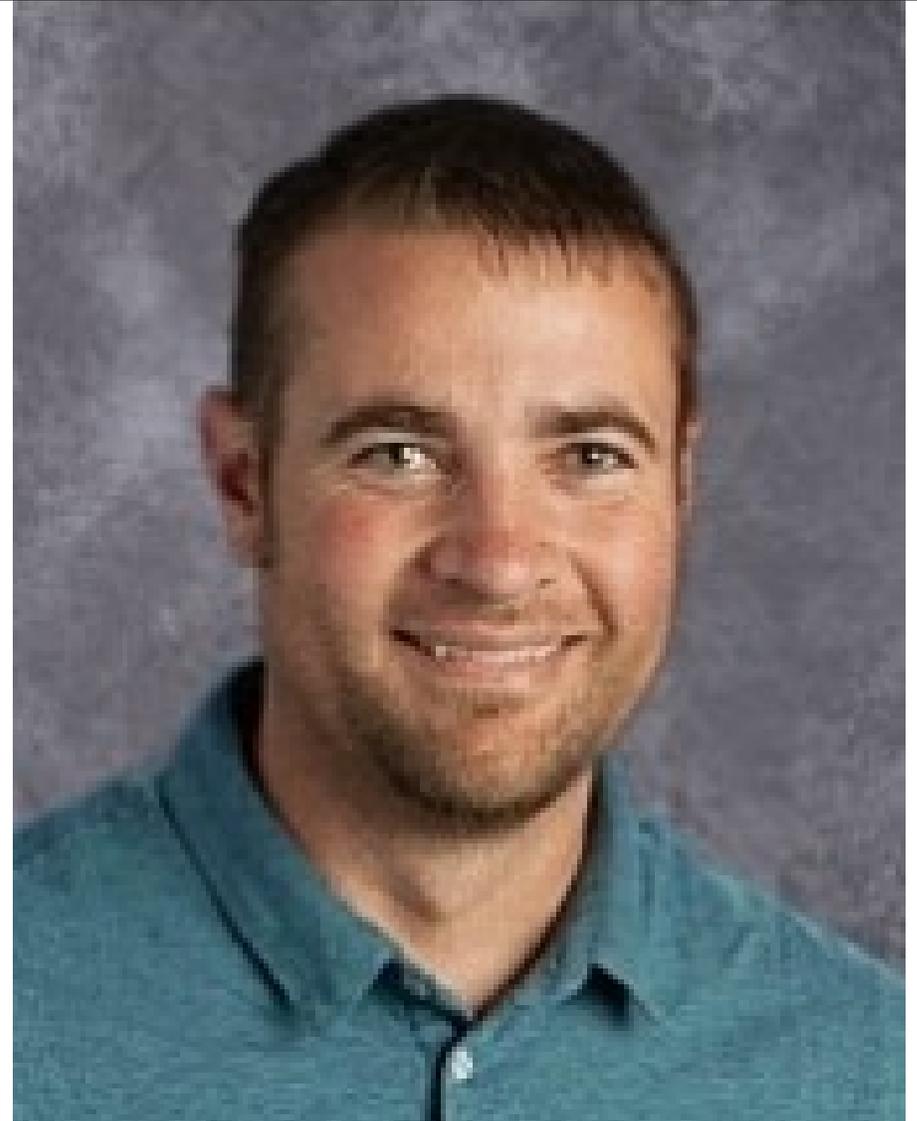


Justin Thornley

"Success in life is loving what you do so much that you would do it for free but doing it so well that you actually get paid for it."

For Justin Thornley, an agriculture educator at Emery High School in Castle Dale, Utah, that is the true meaning of success. As an educator for 12 years, Mr. Thornley has instilled a work hard attitude in life as well as in the classroom into all of his students.

Thornley earned an Associate of Science from Snow College and a Bachelor of Science in agriculture education from Utah State University. At Emery High, Mr. Thornley offers his students a Career and Technical Education pathway in animal and veterinary science. His courses are also taught as concurrent enrollment through Snow College. Mr. Thornley is also the FFA Advisor and has built a very successful program at Emery High.



Utah's 2021 Teacher of the Year Nominee



Pamela Wright

Pamela Wright is a 21-year veteran teacher who currently teaches 4th grade at Eagle View Elementary in Roosevelt, Utah. Wright has Bachelor of Science from Utah State University and Master of Education, majoring in Elementary Education, also from Utah State University. She has dedicated her career to students, families, colleagues and the community of Eagle View Elementary through establishing connections and relationships. She believes that forming strong relationships is the core of successful teaching.

Wright is an advocate for the mental well being of students and has been the Suicide Prevention Advisor at Eagle View Elementary for the past six years. She has positively impacted the lives of many students through the suicide prevention program and has contributed significantly to the overall positive culture of the school. She is a certified instructor of suicide prevention and trains staff and community members.

Wright believes in promoting positive behavior through teaching social-emotional skills. She currently serves on the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Team and had served on the Student Intervention Team for the past eight years.

Wright has taught and supervised the After-School Connection Program and summer school programs at Eagle View Elementary. She has also served on numerous school and district leadership committees and has been a team leader and mentor throughout her career.

