



# CELEBRATING the Nominees for 2025 New Hampshire Teacher of the Year

Every day a New Hampshire teacher makes a difference in the life of a child. Every year the NH Department of Education honors outstanding educators who make their communities, profession, and the world a better place.



New Hampshire

**Department of Education**

# DANIEL ALBERTA

## Conant Middle High School Jaffrey

▶ “I believe that teachers should not be afraid to take risks. A good example of this would be implementing more project based learning in their classes. I've experienced so much success with this over the years, reaching so many different types of learners.”



# MICHAEL ALLEN

## Elm Street Middle School Nashua

▶ “By providing appropriate accommodations, differentiated instruction, and specialized resources, we can ensure that every student, regardless of their abilities or challenges, has an equal opportunity to succeed.”



# GABRIELLE ANDERSON

## Oyster River High School Durham

- ▶ “A successful student can collaborate with their peers. They can communicate their ideas effectively. They lead and participate in classroom activities by positively engaging with other students to achieve group goals.”



CHELSEA BARRETT  
Highland-Goffe's Falls Elementary  
School  
Manchester

▶ “As a teacher today I have encountered countless celebrations, success, challenges, and overcoming obstacles. There have been several experiences that have led me to feel empowered and bold as an educator.”



# THOMAS BATTLES

## Hanover Street School Lebanon

- ▶ “Preschool is likely a child’s first experience of a structured school routine. The structured preschool setting with a preschool curriculum allows children to grow emotionally, physically, and academically.”



# MICHELE BREZOVEC

## South Meadow School Peterborough

▶ “Once a student feels they belong, they take their learning to another level and find their “place” with their fellow learners... You never quite know what impacts students and what they find meaningful.”



# HEATHER BURKETT

Hampstead Central School  
Hampstead

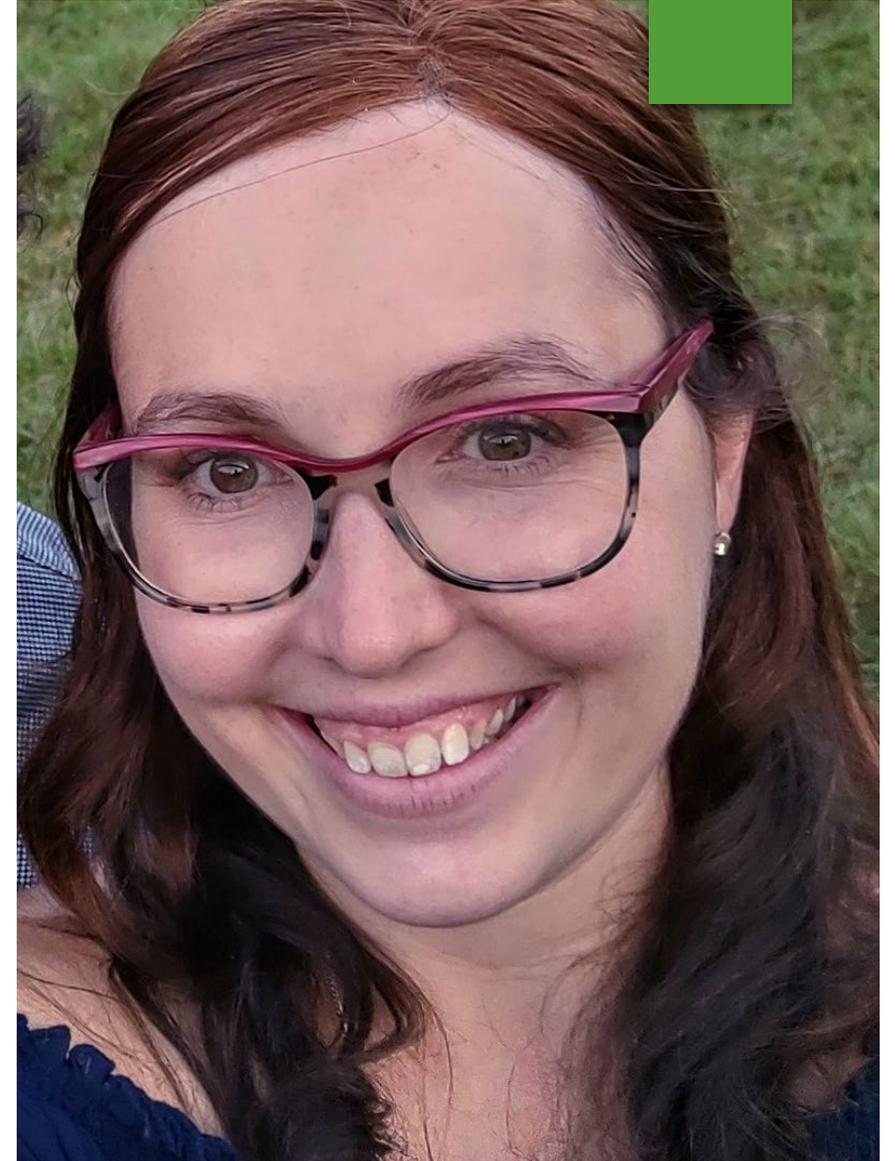
▶ “I’m incredibly interested in how the brain learns and immerse myself in various professional development activities to keep learning and evolving as a teacher. There are an unlimited amount of factors that affect learning.”



# MEGAN CARGILL

## Hampton Centre School Hampton

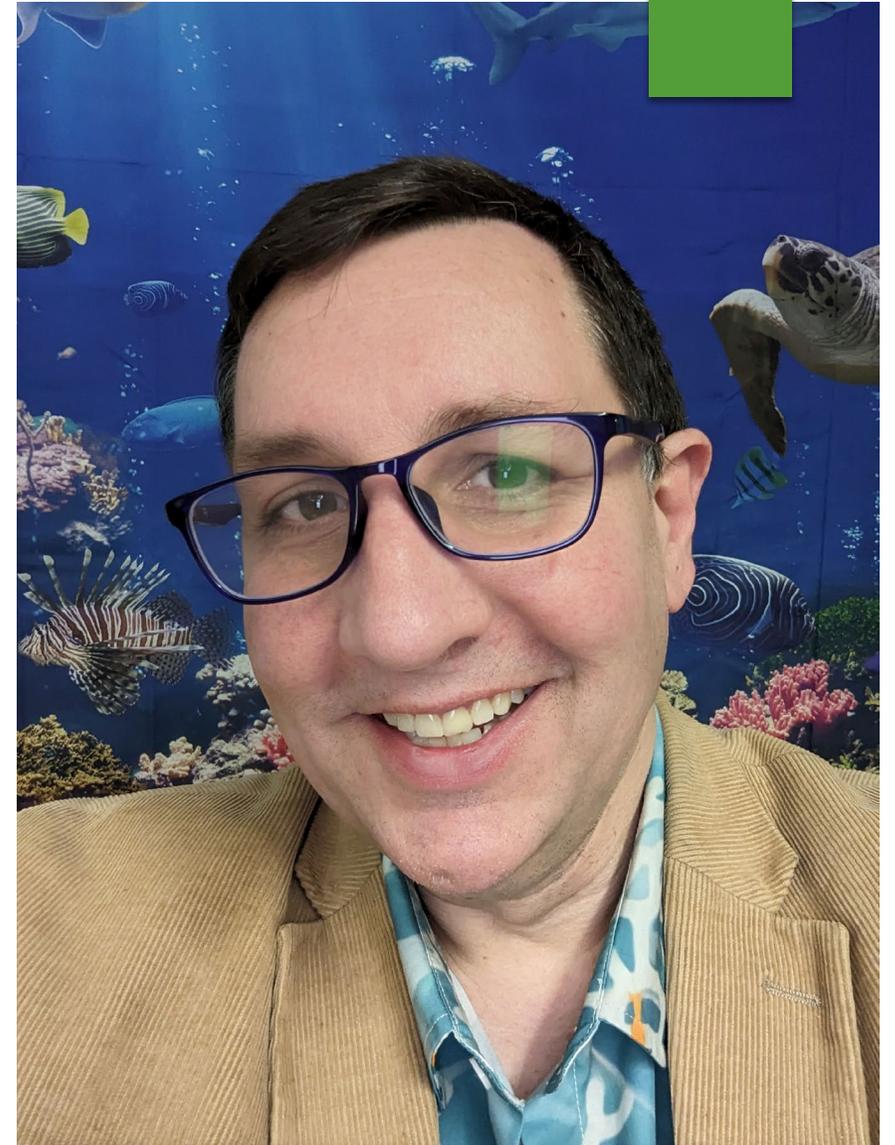
▶ “Before a teacher can begin to teach their students, a trusting relationship must be formed. Without trust, why should the student believe anything that the teacher is saying to them? The relationship must be nurtured through honesty, care and commitment to students and learning.”



# CHRISTOPHER CLAUSS

## Marlborough School Marlborough

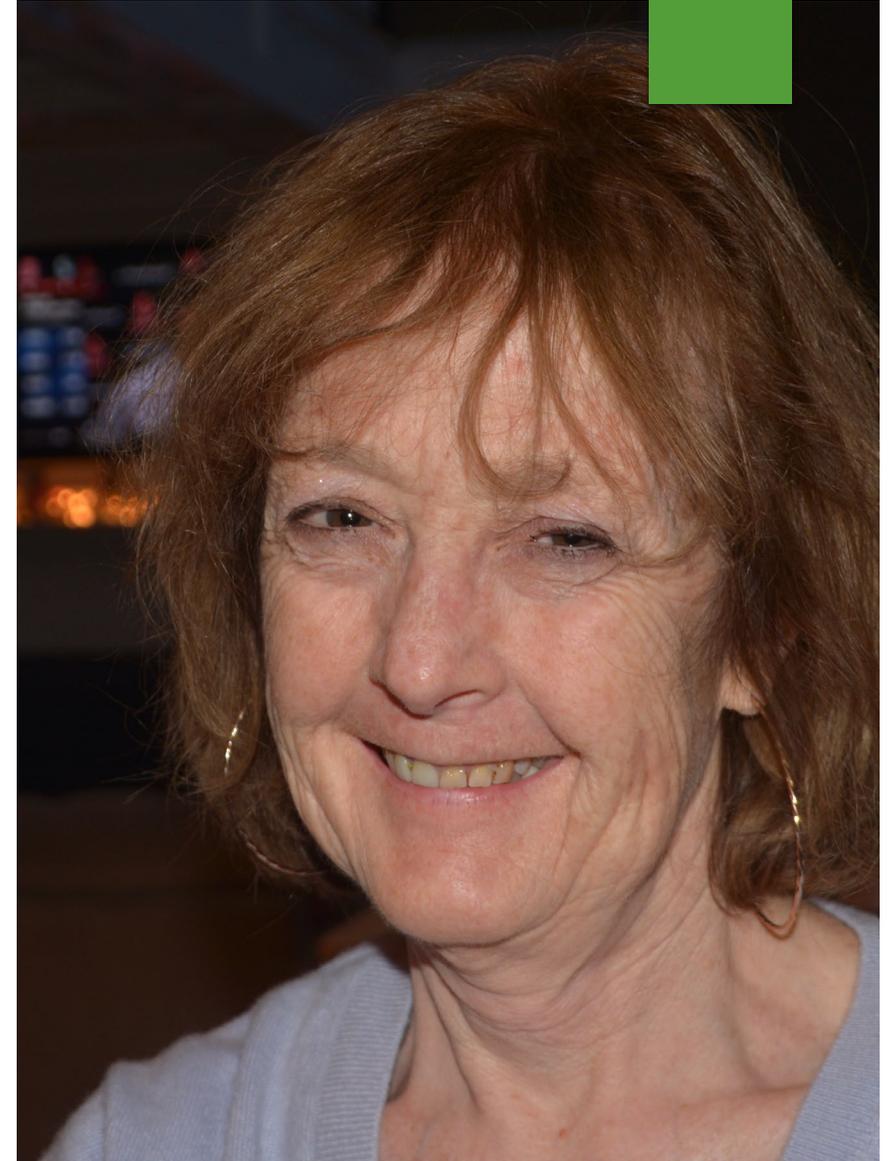
▶ “The successful student in my science lab is not perfect. They know where they need to improve, and they strive to do it. They view reassessment as an opportunity and not a punishment. They want to prove, mostly to themselves, that they can learn at the level I’m asking of them, to grow and stretch and reach for more.”



# RITA COLBY

## Hampton Centre School Hampton

▶ “As an educator, I believe that communication and respect among the community and their school should stay open and be conducted in a positive, nonjudgemental manner. Everyone involved is working towards a common goal of instilling the joy of learning in their students so they’ll grow into life-long learners.”



JACQUELYN COTNOIR  
Manchester Memorial High School  
Manchester

▶ “I don’t teach because of my love of content. I can learn content and then teach it because I believe in a love of relationship building, personal growth, and future change.”



# JESSICA COUGHLIN

## Lamprey River Elementary School Raymond

▶ “Students who don’t know how to use their imagination or play with others are not going to be successful in learning. When a child knows how to communicate with others, and control their emotions, is when they are going to succeed both socially and academically.”



KRISTEN DACEY  
Dr. Lewis F. Soule Elementary School  
Salem

▶ “Education is always evolving, and that is what makes it a field I am so proud to be a part of. I believe that when educators work together with a shared desire to create change and positively impact students, anything is possible.”



# CANDICE DEANGELIS

## Bedford High School Bedford

▶ “To me, learning should never feel like work. I think that learning fuels curiosity, creates wonder, and ignites emotion. I also fully believe that sometimes there are things that we have to learn that serve as stepping stones to further exploration, but even these stepping stones should make students come back for more.”



# MICHAEL DERBY

## ConVal Regional High School Peterborough

▶ “My goal, as a teacher, is to help students find their voice and find who they are as a human while also achieving academic success. As a high school teacher, I am lucky enough to influence human beings at an extremely important and vulnerable time of their life.”



JESSI DIAMOND  
Strong Foundations Charter School  
Pembroke

► “Positive mindset, healthy stress habits, and therapy/mentorship are necessary for teachers to be able to provide the level of service that is needed in their communities.”



# MARIA DOMINGUEZ DIAZ

## Fairgrounds Middle School Nashua

▶ “One thing for sure however, is that in order to help each individual student reach their own personal success the teacher has to invest time and effort in building a relationship with the students that are in the class.”

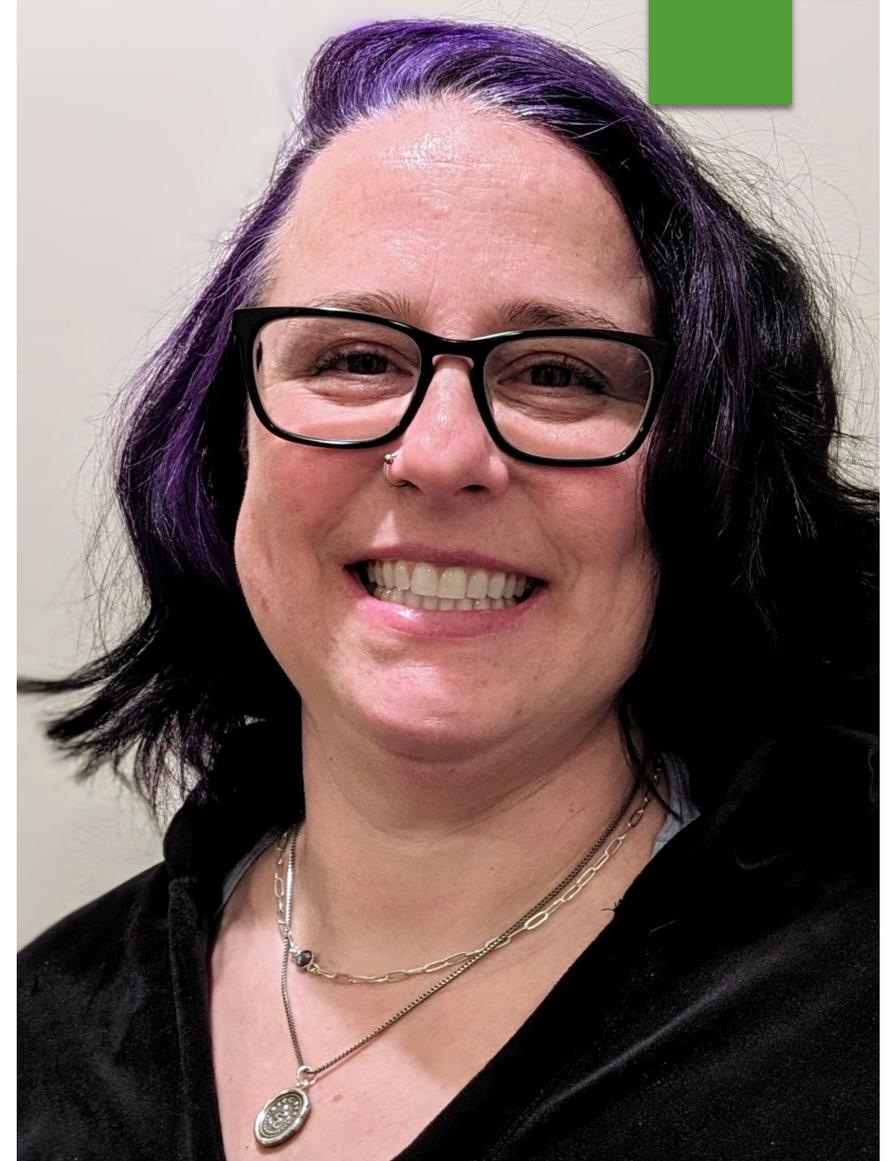


# BEATRICE DONOHUE

## Chester Academy

### Chester

▶ “My favorite moments of joy that I keep close to my heart, are the ones where students look up from what they are doing with looks of sheer astonishment and say “No way that is a real thing!”. Then that student and I get to have such a great learning conversation as they wrap and stretch their minds around new ideas.”



AMY DOOLIN  
Newfound Regional High School  
Bristol

▶ “I think that is one of the things I am most proud of as a teacher, showing the students that it is ok to be absolutely unapologetically yourself. This creates the space students need to do this themselves.”



LAUREN DUQUETTE  
Bakersville Elementary School  
Manchester

▶ “I consider a student successful by their ability to apply, correctly, what they have been taught. A student that is able to determine the appropriate strategy to solve a problem.”



# DEANNE DURANT

## Centre Elementary School Hampton

▶ “I readily acknowledge that all staff that work in my classroom are essential workers... I am fortunate to have highly qualified, compassionate, and diligent support staff.”



# JEFFREY DURELL

## Barrington Middle School Barrington

▶ “Seeing a student’s eyes light up when they understand still sends a thrill through me even now. It is a truly remarkable thing to see a student discover their confidence and build on it.”



# JENNIFER EATON

## Cornish Elementary School Cornish

▶ “Breaking out of our small, rural bubble is vital to giving our kids a well-rounded education. It’s important for students to realize there is more going on outside the walls of our classroom and even beyond the border of our town and state.”



ERICA EKEBERG  
Strong Foundations Charter School  
Pembroke

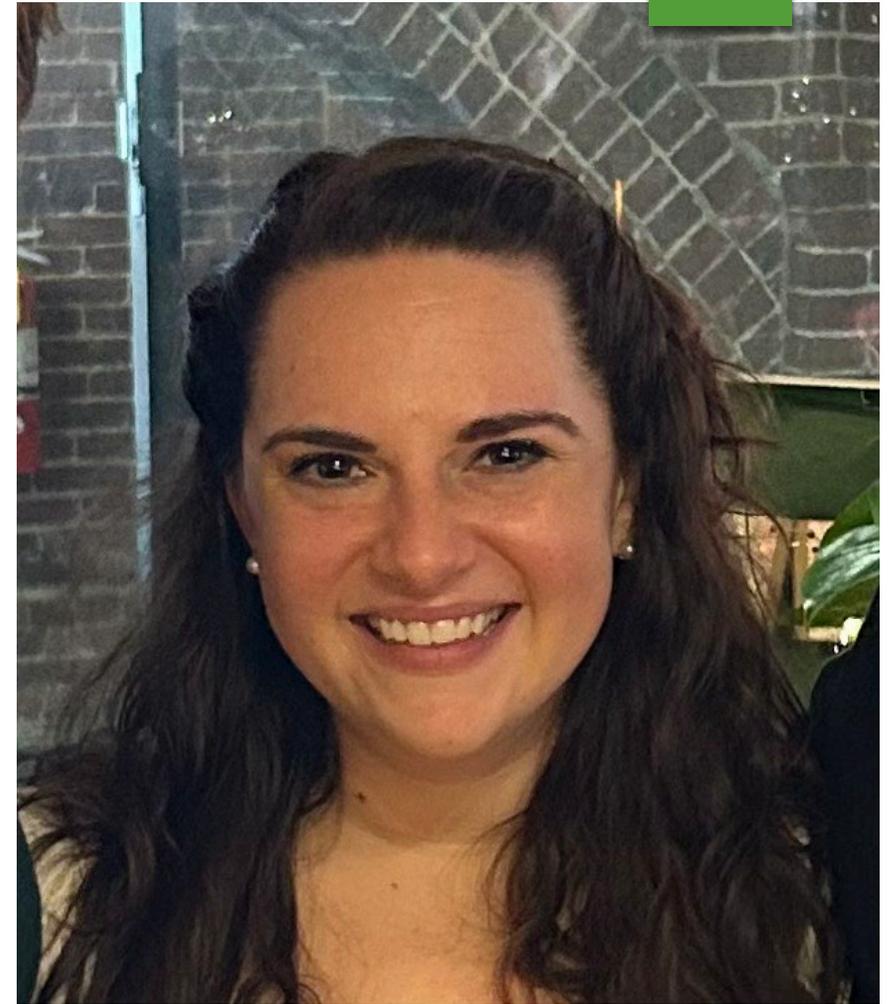
▶ “If I notice or another student notices something that isn’t working well in the classroom, we problem solve together. We talk it out and figure out a solution to that problem.”



# CHRISTINE ELLIS

## Hollis Brookline High School Hollis

▶ “The tools that are most helpful to my career aren’t tools, but people. I am grateful to be in a social studies department with creative, supportive confidants that help me push my skills to the next level.”



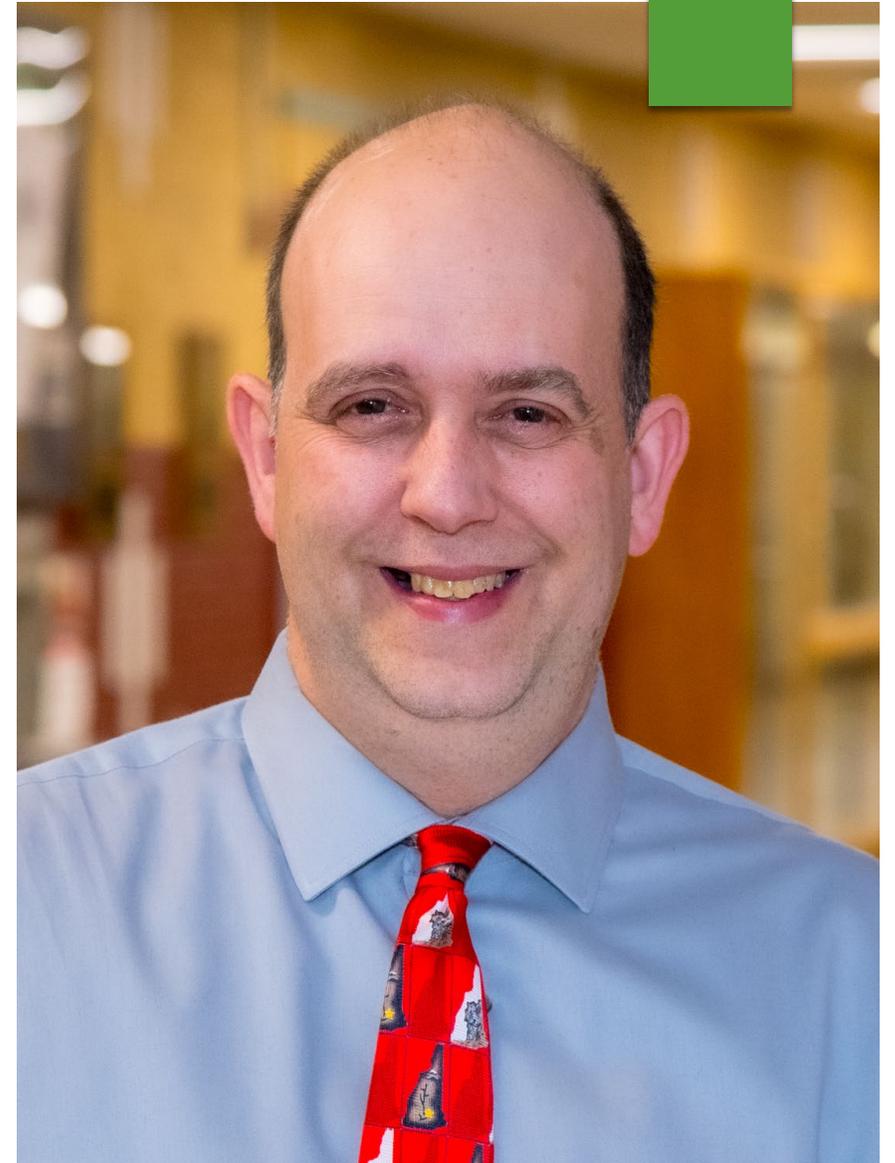
REBECCA FORTGANG  
Fall Mountain Regional High School  
Langdon

▶ “Ensuring that students are connected to the world around them is integral to fostering relevance and real-world application in their learning journey... By linking classroom concepts to real-life situations, students grasp the significance and applicability of their learning beyond the confines of the classroom.”



ROBERT FULLER  
Manchester Memorial High School  
Manchester

▶ “A successful student benefits from working with their peers in a supportive environment. It is paramount that we as educators make that effort each and every day to foster those positive relationships with our students.”



# NICOLE GAMMELLA

## Middle School at Parkside Manchester

▶ “My passion for teaching is fueled by making a difference, even if it is the smallest difference. I believe that education is the key to a successful future.”



# DAIJA GERMAIN

## Hinsdale Elementary School Hinsdale

► “I think it is essential that teachers keep their “why” in mind. This is a hard profession and sometimes we need to remind ourselves of why we decided to become a teacher and what we want to accomplish.”



ANNE-MARIE GRAVES  
Thorntons Ferry Elementary School  
Merrimack

▶ “Lessons that define me as a teacher are fun, engaging and always a bit out of the box, but mostly my best lessons are the ones that my students take over and demonstrate leadership skills.”



# BRIAN GRAY

## Sanborn Regional High School Kingston

- ▶ “I firmly believe that being able to effectively navigate and resolve challenges is a crucial aspect of success, both inside and outside of the classroom.”



# SHELLY GRAY

## Lebanon Middle School

### Lebanon

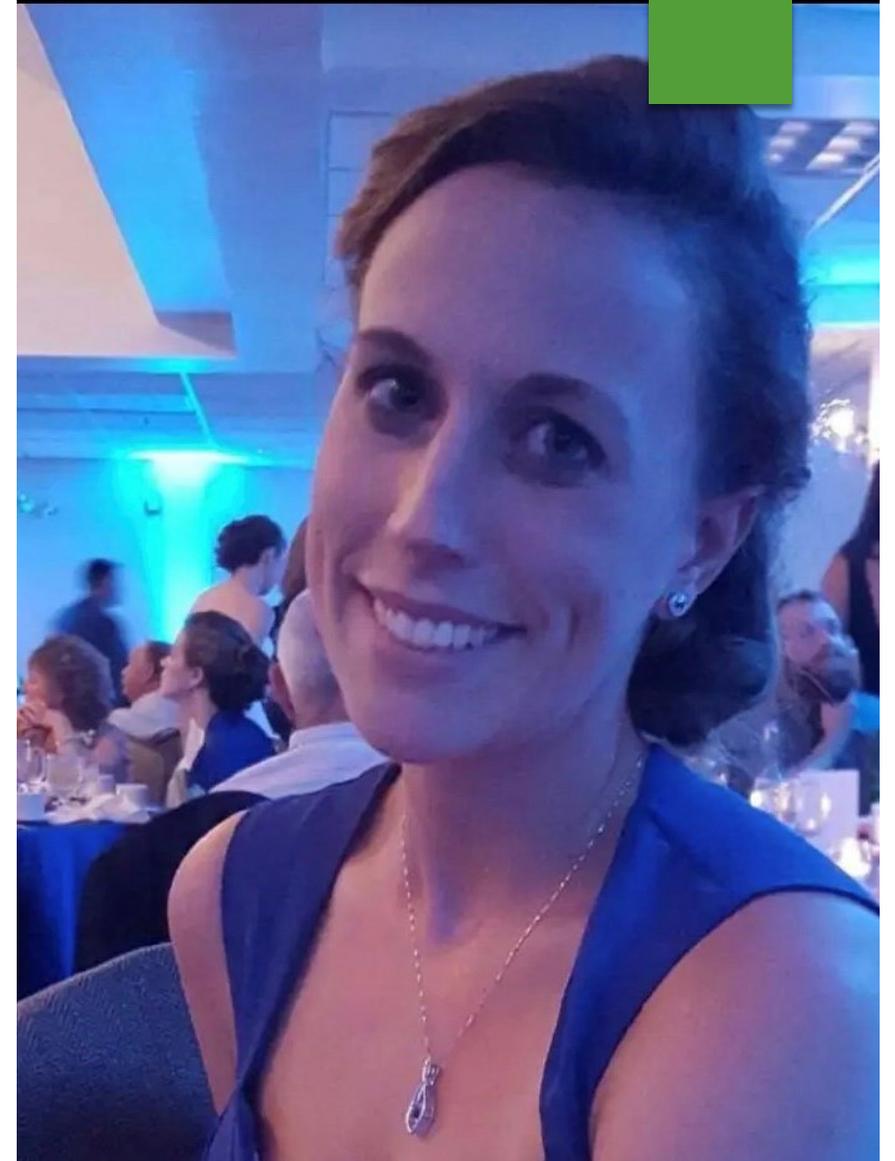
▶ “A healthy classroom is one where there is no judgment, people are accepted for who they are, their strengths are utilized, their weaknesses are improved upon and teachers know who the students are.”



# HEATHER HAMILTON

Hollis Brookline High School  
Hollis

▶ “To me, the tools and resources needed to be a successful teacher are not any fancy gadgets or technology; none of these really add to success in my opinion. To me, the resource most needed is time to plan and collaborate with colleagues.”



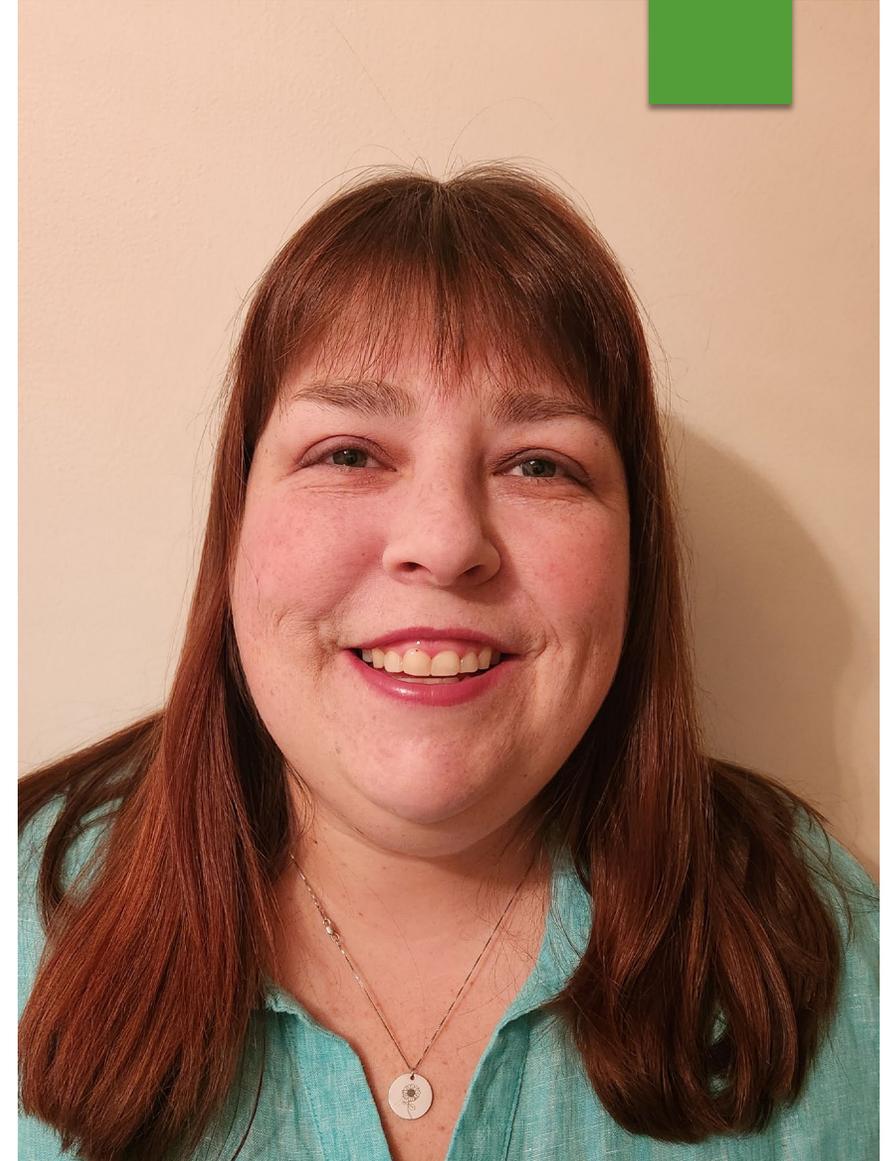
JESSICA HARRINGTON  
Greenfield Elementary School  
Greenfield

▶ “Teaching is more than just sharing facts and knowledge with students. An important part of being a teacher is helping students build connections to their learning and with their peers.”



ANDREA HATCH  
Captain Samuel Douglass Academy  
Brookline

▶ “When I have students that have had trouble at school and are full of anxiety, I always build relationships with these students, be patient with them, listen to them, be caring and understanding, and take time to show them that they can overcome their anxiety and have a successful school year.”



# BRITTNEY HEWETT

## Hampstead Middle School Hampstead

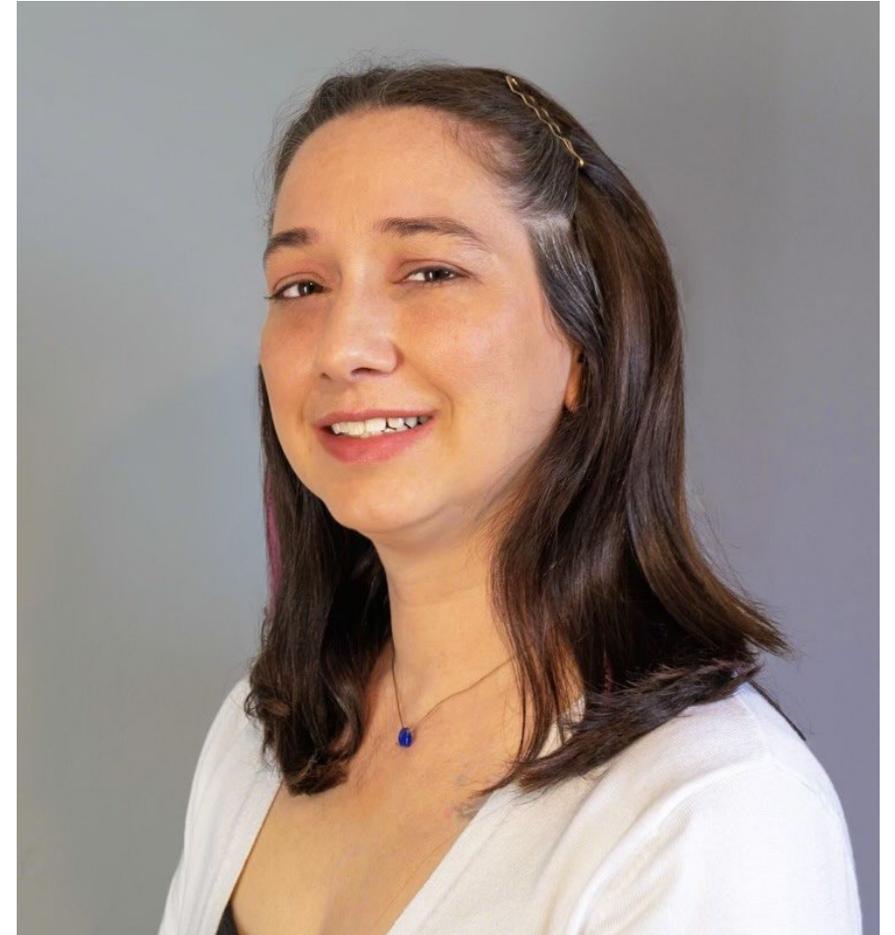
▶ “When creating a lesson, my goal is to engage 100% of the students and hope they walk away from my class learning something new. I try to incorporate all four types of learners in each lesson and keep them engaged by including real life examples and practices that will reinforce the material.”



# KARLA HOGGARD

## Weston Elementary School Manchester

▶ “Building relationships with your students and between students allows them the space to open up and be themselves. Students need to feel comfortable and relevant to learn.”



# RACHEL HOGLUND

## Marlborough School Marlborough

▶ “Inviting families and community members into schools for events, learning workshops, and collaboration will create a stronger bond between home and school. This will only result in positive outcomes.”



# MATTHEW HOLLAND

## White Mountain Regional High School Whitefield

▶ “Teaching has never been a job to me, but rather a duty to share my wisdom, experience, knowledge, passion, and skill in the Culinary and Hospitality field. In my transition to becoming a certified teacher, I was fortunate to have great mentors and a process that taught me the skills I needed to be successful.”



# KIMBERLY HOUGHTALING

## The Cooperative Middle School Stratham

- ▶ “A successful student in my class is a student who understands their learning profile and the connection between their specific intervention pathways and how it supports them with being a more independent and confident learner.”

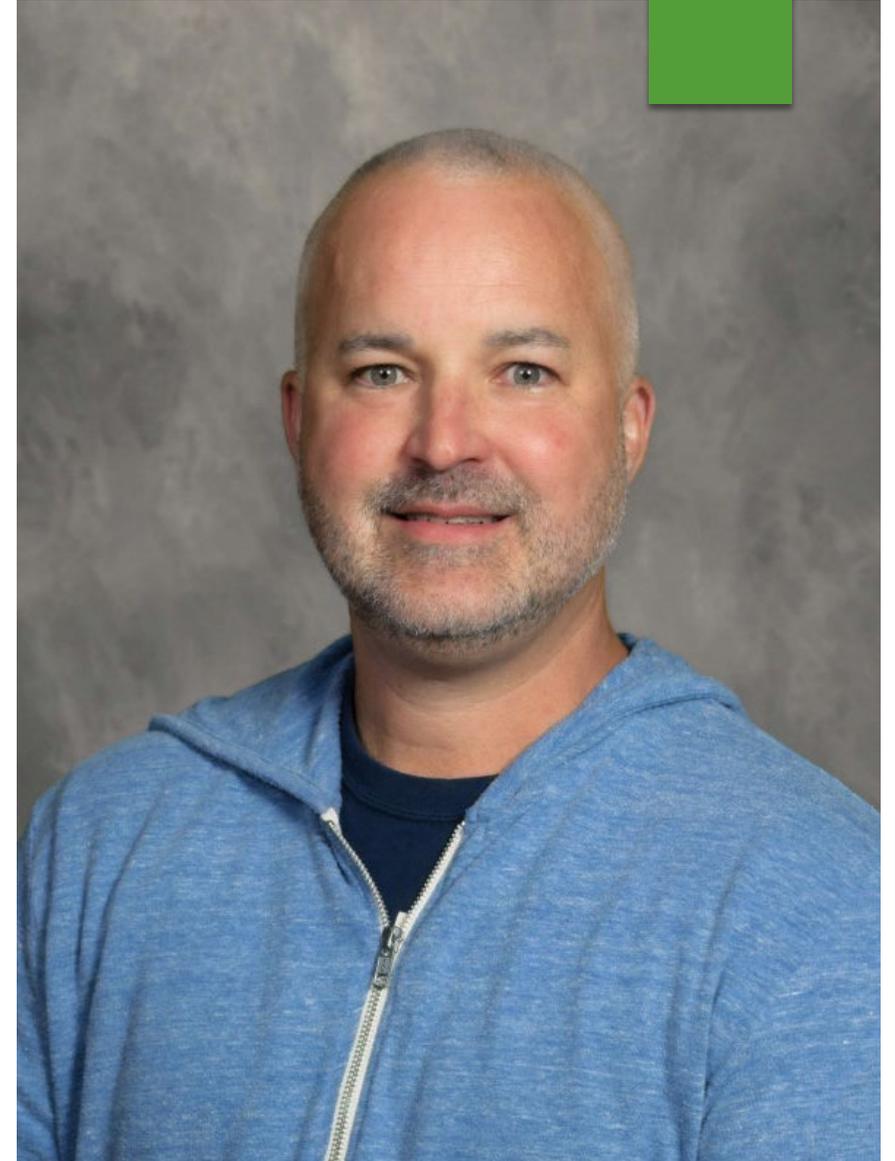


# JOHN HOULIHAN

## Dover Middle School

### Dover

▶ “I would advocate for greater collaboration between educators, students, families, and community partners to co-design learning experiences that are relevant, engaging, and meaningful to students’ lives.”



# ANNIE KEATING

## South Meadow School Peterborough

▶ “I consistently work to learn as much as I can and reflect on ways I can continue to grow and be the teacher my students need and should expect me to be.”



# LAURA KING

## Merrimack Middle School Merrimack

▶ “I have spent my career continuing to be a life-long learner and reflecting on previous years to improving my classroom. The best teachers are those that continue to grow and evolve over time.”



AMY LEDOUX  
Henry Wilson Memorial School  
Farmington

- ▶ “Awareness and investing in educators needs to be a top priority in our society to ultimately better prepare our students to be active, productive, knowledgeable citizens.”



# JORDAN LEMAY

## Windham Center School Windham

▶ “Giving my students effective feedback is vital to understanding and perceiving their skills. If a student needs more support, I always note that I would love to work with them and that we should devise a plan to ensure they get the help they need.”



# CAITLEN MADORE

## Spaulding High School Rochester

▶ “I think kids remember content they felt a connection to, but they remember the teachers that impacted them more.”



# MELISSA MANNING

## Newmarket Elementary School Newmarket

▶ “The powerful feeling of belonging and acceptance is not to be underestimated. When children are a part of a supportive classroom community they become more adept at seeing the benefits of practicing those skills beyond the walls of our classroom.”



# AMY MAURICE

Henry W. Moore School  
Candia

▶ “Students are capable of achieving a higher level of mastery. We just need to ask them to do it.”



# SAMANTHA MCGUIRE

## Hanover Street School Lebanon

▶ “I constantly strive to create an environment that fosters academic excellence, personal growth, and a love for learning among my students. My approach to teaching is characterized by innovation, empathy, and a deep understanding of the diverse needs of every learner in my classroom.”



# SHANDI MCGUIRK

## Walpole Elementary School Walpole

▶ “Learning should be fun, exciting, and transformative in that it provides opportunities for students to engage in experiences they remember, grow from, and develop innovations from.”



# LAURA MCKENNA

## Mill Brook School Concord

▶ “Our goal is to create a community of engaged and collaborative independent thinkers. The values and skills that we teach these students will prepare them to enter the extremely complicated society we live in.”



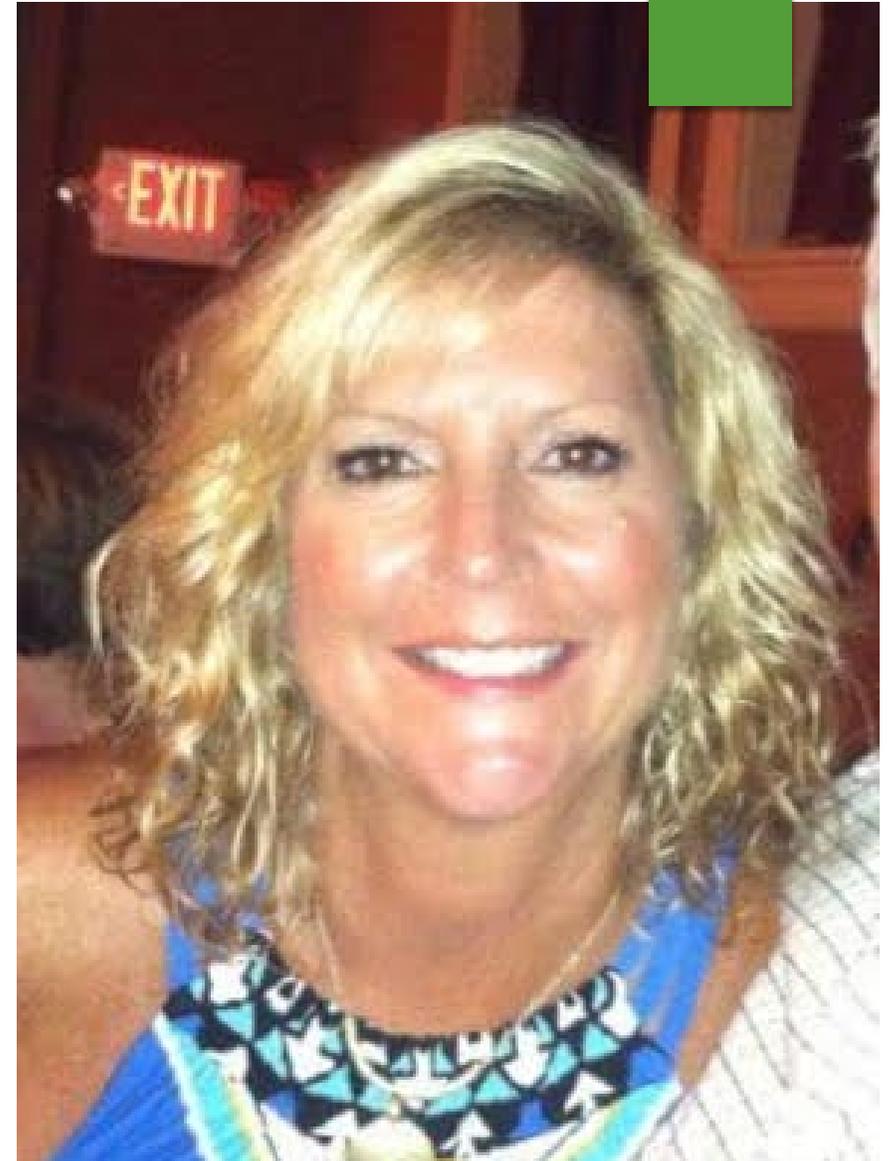
VIRGINIA MCLAY  
Hillsboro-Deering Elementary School  
Hillsboro

▶ “Kindergarteners are naturally curious about the world around them, that makes teaching them easy! They are like little sponges who want to absorb everything.”



DENISE MEAGHER  
Monarch School of New England  
Rochester

▶ “My focus is always on having an attitude of positivity and gratitude... This helps to ensure my team is happy and feels supported.”



ASHLEY MEYER  
Iber Holmes Gove Middle School  
Raymond

▶ “Responsibility is not something that comes to every student quickly and it often takes patience and time. When a child starts to have a routine and understands that doing what is expected helps them not only academically but emotionally, you see them relax.”



# KATHRYN NADEAU

## Weston Elementary School Manchester

▶ “Overall, success in my classroom is defined by the holistic development of each student, with a particular focus on their unique strengths, needs, and goals.”



CHERYL NEWSHAM  
Clark Wilkins Elementary School  
Amherst

▶ “I can honestly say every minute of each student’s day is a seized opportunity to connect them to the world around them. Practicing communication skills with peers and adults to communicate their wants and needs and their feelings throughout their daily interactions both naturally and contrived with thoughtfulness and purpose.”



# SARA NORBY

## South Meadow School Peterborough

▶ “As an educator, one of my goals is to create meaningful learning experiences that allow students to discover new concepts and explore new skills.”



TABITHA PAQUETTE  
Colebrook Academy and Elementary  
School  
Colebrook

▶ “I perpetually work to energize my students, I urge them to believe in themselves and to have confidence in their abilities, and all the while, never really thinking what I was doing was a “big deal”. It was, and it too a life changing event for me to realize it.”



JENNIFER PAQUIN  
Gossler Park Elementary School  
Manchester

▶ “In my classroom, any accomplishment is a big accomplishment that deserves to be recognized. We enjoy cheering for each other, giving high fives, and sprinkling each other’s good work. I can easily say that my students are genuinely excited for each other as they make and meet their goals.”



# LISA PETERSON

## Arts Academy of New Hampshire Nashua

▶ “As an educator, even early in my career, I thought it was important for students to have a voice in my class and they let me know today that I do that, they feel safe to give incorrect answers because I don’t judge them if they give a wrong answer and I also didn’t say things like *there are no wrong answers* because that just isn’t true.”



# AMY POIRIER

## Dover High School

### Dover

▶ “For me, so much of teaching is learning. I consider myself to be the “learner in chief” in my classroom. Together with my students I am always learning new things about science, but more importantly I am learning how to be a better teacher.”



SHALEENA PULLIAM  
MicroSociety Academy Charter  
School  
Nashua

▶ “Education isn’t just about giving them knowledge, but about helping foster their creative thinking, autonomy and independence.”



# LARISSA RAGAZZO

## Dover Middle School

### Dover

▶ “Students are encouraged to ask for help when they need it... As students become more comfortable in my classroom, they become better at asking for help, which is celebrated.”



# BENJAMIN RAMSEY

## Raymond High School Raymond

▶ “In our ever changing world, the biggest challenge educators face is ensuring that the instruction provided to learners develops the skills and practice students will need to be productive citizens throughout their lifetimes.”



# JASON SCHRACK

## Adeline C. Marston School Hampton

- ▶ “Teaching should be engaging, creating curiosity and the desire to question. We should be encouraging appropriate risk taking, mistake making, and creative problem solving.”



# SOPHIA SHEEHAN

## Manchester High School West Manchester

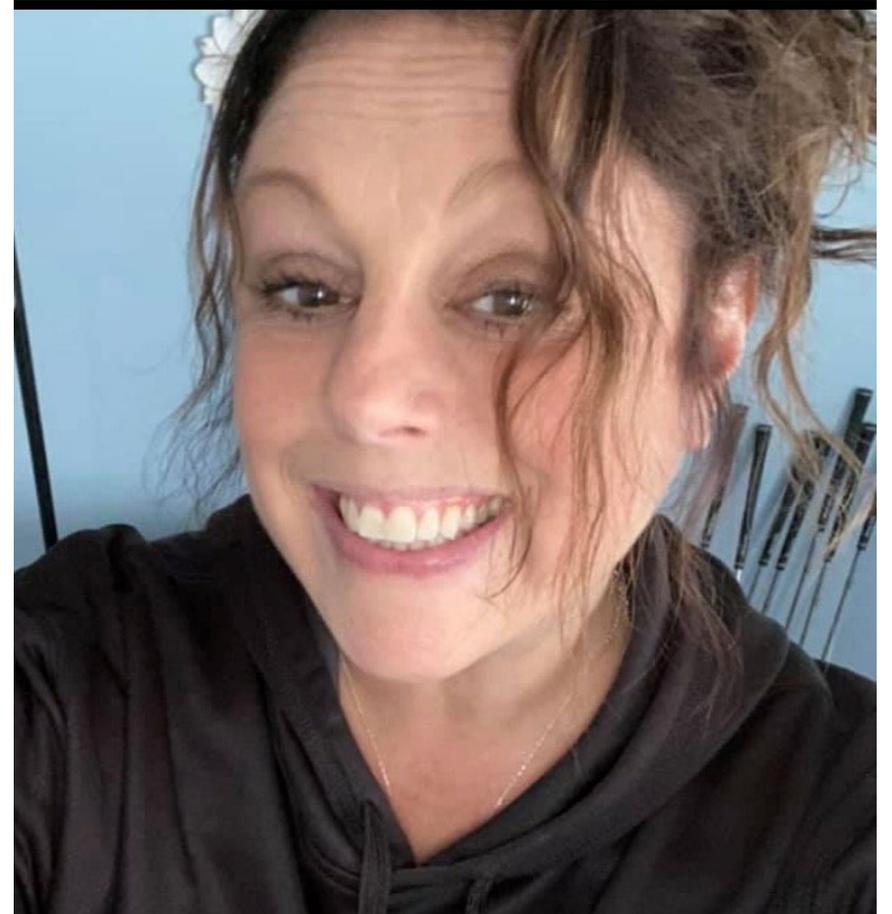
- ▶ “We all come from stars; the elements that make us up were “born” in stars, and I think that education needs to be delivered in a way that allows everyone to shine as brightly as they can.”



# STEPHANIE SILVER

## Manchester High School West Manchester

- ▶ “Kids of all ages need structure and consequences to learn important lessons. All teachers have patience and an arsenal of tricks to teach students of all levels.”



# RICHELLA SIMARD

## Manchester High School West Manchester

▶ “In education, you will always have a small percentage of independent thinkers and learners who can grasp the concept and move forward with little to no help and they may be praised for this but I believe in making sure all students feel this same praise and when given constructive feedback, that it comes from the heart.”



# EMILY SIMPSON

## Lebanon High School

### Lebanon

▶ “I do not see myself as someone who merely delivers education to my students; I think, at my best, I am collaborating not only with my students, but with their families, my colleagues, our community, and even people around the country and world.”



KIMBERLY SMITH  
Clark-Wilkins Elementary School  
Amherst

▶ “My goals as a professional educator have driven me to learn, explore and advocate for a classroom that is built on kindness, collaboration, and an excitement for learning.”



# JAMIE SPITTLE

## St. Benedict Academy Manchester

► “By establishing relationships early in the school year with students and families, I can proceed with academic instruction with minimal interruption by creating a space where students and I are comfortable collaborating and socializing.”



# SHANNON SZEPAK

## Campbell High School Litchfield

▶ “Recognizing technology as an invaluable tool for enriching rather than merely replacing effective teaching practices is key.”



KAITLYN TEDESCHI  
Thorntons Ferry Elementary School  
Merrimack

▶ “When I observe a student able to complete tasks independently and correctly, I have fostered an environment to which they can be successful.”



EMILY THIBAUT  
Winnisquam Regional High School  
Tilton

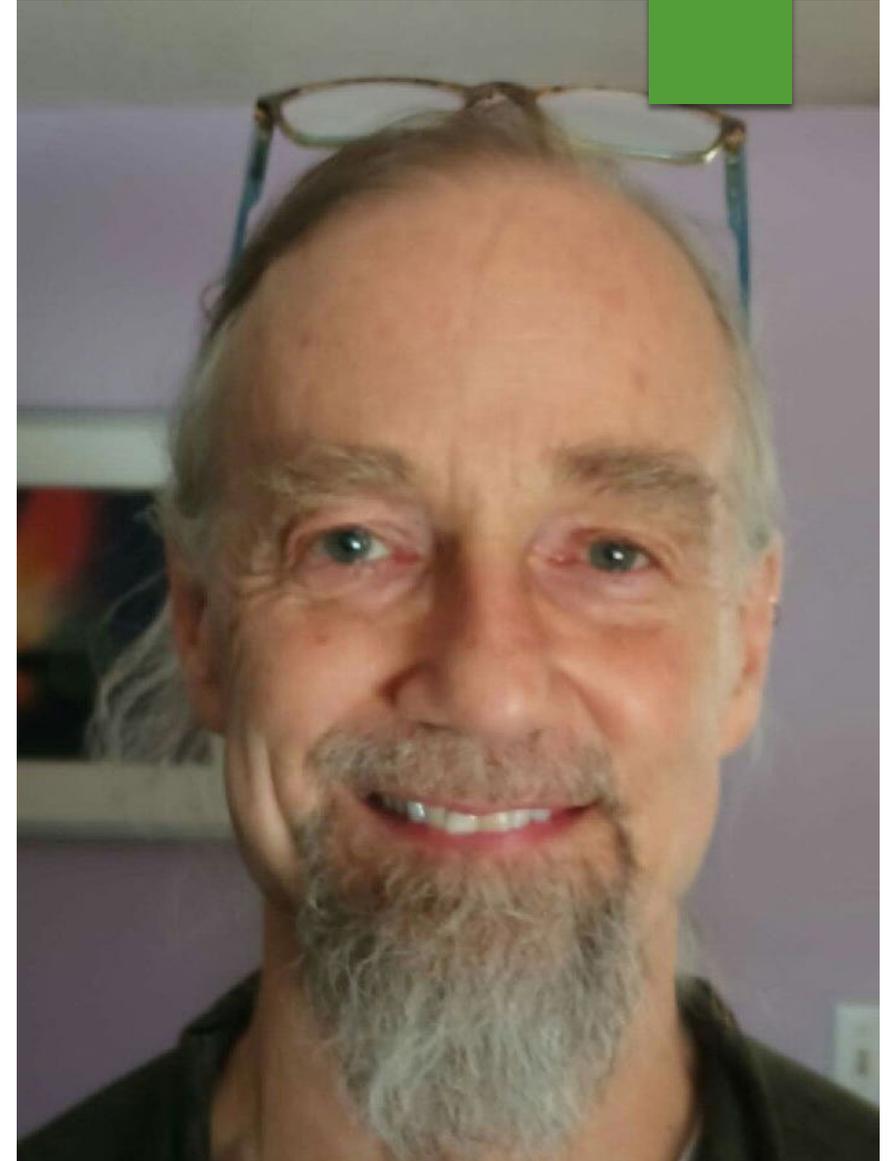
▶ “I firmly believe that every student deserves a dedicated and supportive teacher who is invested in their success. I am committed to being that teacher, inspiring and empowering students to reach their full potential.”



# JAY VANSTECHELMAN

## Chesterfield Central School Chesterfield

▶ “Kids remember teachers who not only challenged them, but those they knew genuinely cared for them, those who were passionate about their subjects and their teaching, and those that showed up each and every day with energy, a smile, and a positive attitude.”



# COLLEEN WEST COATES

## Londonderry High School

### Londonderry

▶ “Collaboration between teachers and families plays a pivotal role in addressing the needs of students. By working together, teachers and families can create a supportive environment that promotes student success both inside and outside the classroom.”

