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Norwood High School

MA Teaching Secondary Mathematics –
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I have been a high school math teacher for six years and continue to learn new and exciting ways to help students master content through curriculum, planning, and assessment, as well as, learning about myself as an educator and professional. Teaching various levels of the first four courses in the high school math sequence - Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and Pre-Calculus - has given me insight into students' prerequisite skills and what they must master before the next school year.

For me, the most interesting and unique aspect of my profession is I have an opportunity to create new goals with students each school year. It is exciting to have the ability to adapt lessons and manipulate materials to best fit my current students. Education is always changing and evolving with new ideas and best practices. I have learned over the years that it is beneficial for educators to be reflective of their teaching and flexible to make the greatest impact. With that being said, it is important for me to reflect on a regular basis and take notes regarding timing/pacing and what worked well. I love looking back at my planner with my lesson notes to make materials better year after year. Another passion of mine is implementing technology and utilizing visual tools to support my students. For example, geometry classes explore the interactive Geometer's Sketchpad technology to explore conjectures and visualize problems.

I teach five math classes on a rotating schedule from 7:30 A.M. to 2:45 p.m. This year I teach two freshman honors geometry classes, one sophomore college geometry class, one sophomore honors algebra II class, and one junior college pre-calculus class. Collaborating with my colleagues to plan and create real world applications and assessments has been one of my favorite aspects of teaching. Some of my favorite assignments allow students to be creative and truly grapple with information, which is how I learned in my mathematics courses at Westfield State University. They require problem solving and the application of mathematics. For example, in Pre-Calculus,

students recreate the MBTA map on graph paper and write a piecewise defined function for each line. To complete a finished product, students apply their knowledge of piecewise functions and take into account the domain and range. Students work in cooperative learning groups to build collaboration and communication skills.

I take a lot of pride in my work as I am an alumni of Norwood High School. I have always wanted to be a teacher and educating in the town where I grew up is an honor. I have also been fortunate to coach the Swim and Dive Team for the past four fall seasons. Being the head coach, I am able to see students in a different light, make meaningful connections with them, and teach teamwork and leadership. There is no question, coaching and teaching go hand in hand and these experiences have made me more mindful of students' commitments and lives outside the classroom.

From my first year of teaching until now, I can honestly say there have been highs and lows. When I am in my classroom doing what I love and seeing my students truly learn makes it all worth the effort. Hard work and a genuine thirst for knowledge are the keys to success in the classroom, in the real world, and what I strive to instill in my students everyday.