

Josh Topp

Crane Middle School

2016 Rodel Exemplary Teacher Finalist

A tip for new teachers

“ Connect with your students and get to know them as individuals. When students feel known, they feel valued. Make a kid feel valued and he will move mountains for you. It is so easy to become 'too busy' with all the tasks demanded of teachers, but don't economize relationships. Small things can be a really big deal for a kid, so take the time to have a conversation and get to know each student. Students don't forget the teachers who took the time to influence and get to know them.

Learning from a mentor

“ During my first year teaching, a mentor advised, "When planning instruction, overplan. By overplanning your lessons, you will ensure no class time goes to waste." This piece of advice has helped me be well-prepared and organized at all times. If my students happen to finish an assignment early, I have additional learning opportunities ready. We are never done learning.

A tip for parents

“ I would encourage parents to get involved with their child's school: join the PTO, volunteer in a classroom, or chaperone a school event. I would also suggest to parents to communicate regularly with their child's teacher(s). Teachers, no matter how busy, love to hear from parents. It conveys to your child's teacher that you want to be informed about what is going on in your child's education.

Bragging rights

“ I am most proud of the staff and administration I work with on a daily basis. Every educator at my school is a leader in learning and has a passion for teaching. Each staff member puts the needs of students before their own. I love the atmosphere that has been created and the fact that every adult in the building is approachable, personable, and holds high expectations for each student. This ensures every student feels supported and secure at our school.



Josh Topp
Crane Middle School

Crane Elementary District

Seventh and Eighth grade Math

Experience: Five years in education including four years as a seventh- and eighth-grade accelerated mathematics teacher and one year as an AVID teacher; currently serving as co-chair for the math department, team lead, student council advisor, eighth-grade soccer coach, and member of school leadership team and district math leadership team; previously served as technology coordinator

Degrees: B.S. in Marketing & Business Administration from Indiana Wesleyan University; Secondary Education Certificate 7-12 with the following approved areas: Middle Grades Mathematics 7-8, Marketing, and SEI K-12 endorsement; currently pursuing a M.Ed. in Educational Leadership at Northern Arizona University

The Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative honors extraordinary teachers and asks that they each mentor high-potential student teachers.

What sets the program apart from typical student teaching programs is that mentor teachers are selected based on their outstanding student achievement in high-need schools, their ability to mentor new teachers, and the recommendation of their principals and Rodel's observation team. This ensures that student teachers are learning from the best. In addition, Rodel provides further training and support to both mentors and student teachers to assure Promising Student Teacher Graduates start their careers as outstanding educators.

Since 2004, 167 Rodel Exemplary Teachers have been named and more than 650 Rodel Promising Student Teachers have been mentored.

The 2016 Rodel Exemplary Teachers will be announced on November 29 at www.rodelaz.org.