

Mark Daniels is the heart and soul of Weber High School as he teaches, inspires, cares, makes connections with students and daily gives his all to being a master teacher. He supports his students daily, validates their strengths while helping build up their weaknesses, instills the importance of hardwork, commitment, teamwork and unity. Mark is also the ultimate colleague as he is the first to volunteer when help is needed and he supports everyone in all they are doing. Regardless of what is going on, Mark will stop what he is doing to help a colleague, student or parent. He helps and serves at every opportunity.

While most teachers complain of large class sizes, Mark welcomes the opportunity to teach 50 plus students in all of his classes. It doesn't matter who you are, Mark wants you in his class. He gets to know each student individually and structures his teaching to meet the different learning styles of his students. Mark teaches skills such as communication, relationship building, grit, endurance, resiliency, humility, grace and teamwork that help students become successful now and throughout life. He has high expectations, allows the students to demonstrate learning in various, non-traditional ways and encourages creativity. This makes his class fun, engaging and one where students want to participate. Mark provides positive, constructive feedback that promotes student growth and encouragement to do better. He is the first to celebrate successes, make light of an awkward situation and bring much needed laughter at the right moment. Mark never degrades a student or makes them feel inferior but uses each situation as a teaching moment where students understand and feel good about themselves. Learning is a constant factor in his teaching setting. Mark will reteach or spend as much time as it takes for our students to master concepts and be able to demonstrate the mastery of the necessary skills.

Mark is a positive role model, he connects with our students and genuinely cares about them as a person. He greets his students when they enter his room and he sends them off with a positive comment. If you go by or into Mark's room before or after school, there are always students in there getting help, doing homework or just conversing with him. His room is a safe place where all Weber High students feel comfortable which includes some who have never had him as a teacher but know his room is one where they are always welcome. He is always positive in his communication with students or parents and is never demeaning. Mark is intune to when students are struggling, he takes the time to ask what is going on and will call parents that evening to follow up and make sure the students are alright. Several times Mark has alerted counselors, administration or parents to a situation which has allowed them to intervene and take necessary steps to prevent serious issues. Mark will also call parents after hours to share achievements, successes and upcoming opportunities. There is no time clock to his day and he will always do what is best for kids as every student matters. Many teachers say they do this but Mark lives and does this 7 days a week.

As our theatre director, Mark has produced many outstanding musicals and plays which have provided family entertainment for our community. Mark pays close attention to the talents and abilities of students as well as being cognizant of how many students he can involve in a production when selecting what he will produce. What sets Mark apart from others is his desire to involve as many students as possible and help them be part of our school culture. As students audition for various roles, he makes note of how he can involve everyone, especially

the less talented students. Mark realizes the importance of involving students, helping them find a niche, a sense of belonging and he helps them find as well as realize their purpose which increases individual confidence. Many times he has found a diamond in the rough by choosing to include instead of exclude. Students learn many lessons while in a production, one of which is how to play your role to the best of your ability. Not everyone will play a lead role but every role and part is important. Students are taught to recognize the importance of their role, fulfill it to the best of their ability and have fun while they are doing it. Mark helps every student be successful and grow personally.

Due to Mark's teaching style and abilities as well as the connections he has made, many of our students come back to see him and support running productions. Mark has helped several students earn college scholarships, he has nurtured the talent seed so students continue performing after high school and he has taught our students life skills which allow them to be successful and contributing members of our society. Mark is a teacher who makes a positive lasting impression on students due to how he teaches, what he teaches and how he chooses to daily interact with students.

In my 30 years as an educator, Mark is one of the best that I have associated with, watch teach and interact with students. Mark does things the right way and always with the best interest of kids at heart. It is a privilege to nominate Mark Daniels for the Weber School District Teacher of the Year Award.

Sincerely,

Chris Earnest  
Weber High School Principal