

Looking back
with admiration.

Looking forward
with anticipation.

2022
RETIREMENT
RECEPTION



In Their Own Words

We invited this year's retirees to share some of their most memorable experiences and plans for retirement.

Jane Amundson, 1989

Teacher, Nicollet Middle School

Jane has been serving students in District 191 for 33 years.

What was the most rewarding experience of your career?

The most rewarding experiences of my teaching career are honestly in the classroom when the students can enjoy a good 'Mathketball' game. When they are all engaged, happy, having fun, learning and collaborating, I feel successful and rewarded as a teacher.

Favorite One91 story? My favorite 191 story is the story of our resilience. How we came together to recover from the BHS fire of 1994 and the Nicollet flood of 2008, and of course how we were exemplary in how we handled teaching with covid in 2020-2021. This district has handled difficult times with grit and grace and I am proud of that part of our story.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? I plan to have lots of new adventures in New York City and Boston, where my kids live. I look forward to an abundance of time in the Northwoods at my cabin in Ely, and I look forward to playing my cello and performing more.



Beth Asfeld, 1993

Teacher, Burnsville High School

Beth has been serving students in District 191 for nearly 29 years.

What was the most rewarding experience of your career? When students contact you after graduation and thank you.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? Spend time with family and friends, travel and quilt.



Tami Barth, 1988

Teacher, Early Childhood Special Education - Diamondhead

Tami has been serving students in District 191 for 34 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of

your career? I have felt so fortunate to have chosen a profession that has provided me with the rewards of working with young children and their families. I have had the opportunity to meet families from so many different cultural backgrounds, and I have learned and grown so much from my time with them. I have felt privileged to have families welcome me into their homes, share their stories, and trust me with being a small part of their lives. I have learned so much from my dedicated co-workers and their teaching styles and experiences over the years. My co-workers have become my closest friends and are considered an extension of my family. We have shared joys and challenges over the years, and I have truly felt their love and support as I have raised my own family.

Favorite One91 story? It is fun to see former students or see their parents and hear how their child is doing and be remembered for the time I worked with them. Years ago, I worked with a family and their 2-3 year old child. He would wait for me to drive up looking out the front window, excited to play. Fifteen years later at a neighborhood graduation party, I ran into the mom of that child telling me that I had to meet her son, who was also at the party. He came over to me and gave me a big hug and thanked me for being his speech teacher when he was little. My daughter and her friends who were at a nearby table came up to me later asking me how I knew their popular classmate. I guess he was the guy that my daughter's friends had a crush on. For that moment, I felt like a "cool" mom."

What do you plan to do in your retirement? I plan to enjoy a more relaxed schedule, with more flexibility to travel and spend time with family and friends. I am looking forward to becoming a grandparent with all the perks that come with that role. I will have to figure out the rest as it comes. I've often thought I would volunteer with an early elementary reading program.

Luke Bearth, 1988

Teacher, Edward Neill Elementary

Luke has been serving students in District 191 for 28 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career?

The majority of my time teaching in 191 was spent with first- and second-grade students. It was an honor and thrill to teach students to read and then later attend their highschool plays, graduation parties, and even weddings! Seeing them in the community as firefighters, police officers, teachers, nurses, small business owners, mothers and fathers has been so rewarding.

Favorite One91 story? My favorite ISD 191 story is all about the ONE in 191. Three examples include how the district pulled together after the high school fire, the creation of Class Acts, and the car parades when teachers drove around the attendance areas of their students during the first year of COVID-19.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? Contained within the word retirement is the most important word of what to attend to during reTireMent. Time for God: daily mass; time for my wife: relaxed mornings with breakfast together; time for my mom: caring for her and home; time for my children and grandchildren: delighting in them; and time for me: exercising my mind and body

Mary Brown, 1992

Food Service Assistant Manager, Eagle Ridge Middle School

Mary has been serving students in District 191 for 29 years.



Sarah Burrill, 2005

Educational Assistant, Rahn Elementary

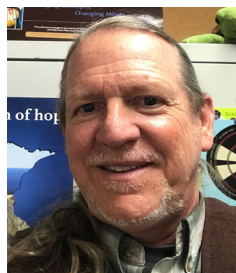
Sarah has been serving students in District 191 for 17 years.



Patrick Chesla, 2014

Social Worker, Edward Neill Elementary

Patrick has been serving students in District 191 for 8 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career?

As a social worker, my job is to try to take in the big picture, while aiming interventions that improve children's lives, and their ability to succeed in their academics. It has been extremely rewarding to participate in positive change with hundreds of children, and their families. Much of my career has been focused on early intervention with younger students. This has been a perfect fit with my personal goals and professional strengths.

Favorite One91 story? For six years I was the School Social Worker at MW Savage Elementary School. While I have worked at several quality schools in my career, this was the best experience I have had. Indeed, there are many high quality teachers and support staff throughout this school district. Still, I'll never forget the incredible teamwork, leadership, and commitment to all students that permeated the staff at MW Savage Elementary. These were the best years of my career, and I'll never forget the people who helped make this happen.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? Retirement is sure to include lots of little projects that I've been putting off. I love landscaping, automotive painting, and spending more time with grandkids, family & friends. Carol and I feel fortunate to have our health, and we intend to travel to many places to learn about and experience the cultures of our world. In the future, we imagine our retirement home in Alexandria will simply be home base.

Julie Daly, 2004

Teacher, Edward Neill Elementary

Julie has been serving students in District 191 for 18 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career? Seeing the progress the students made at the end of the year.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? Spend time with my grandchildren; participate in a Bible study; sleep late; and clean a few closets.

William Derden, 2012

Associate Principal, Burnsville High School

Bill has been serving students in District 191 for 9 years.



Cynthia Drahos, 2006

Teacher, Burnsville High School

Cindy has been serving students in District 191 for 16 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career?

Growing the computer science program at Burnsville High School. When I was given the opportunity to teach in this area I had very little training (self-taught). I decided to go back to college and continue my education in the computer science realm, and I have connected with so many other computer science educators in the state of MN and beyond. I proved to myself that it is never too late to learn a new skill.

Favorite One91 story? When the Chromebooks first arrived at Burnsville High School and the district. I worked with Rachel Gorton and the IT Department to involve students in the training, hand-out, troubleshooting and fixing of the Chromebooks. Having the opportunity to work with our IT department, the IT Exploration class was an opportunity that other districts were very interested in. BHS provided real life experience by having the students work with the Geek Squad, our IT department in the customer service side of assisting students with problems they were having with their Chromebook, summer distribution of Chromebooks and intake of the seniors' Chromebook with powerwashing, cleaning, and servicing of the broken devices. Acer approached our IT department to collaborate with them on a certification program we now provide to all IT Exploration students to become Acer Certified (Techspert) on the Acer Chromebook model we use at BHS. We are learning through hands-on experience and teaching each other new skills and new parts of a Chromebook daily. The students take pride

in what they have learned and use what they learn daily by working with IT at the help desk. It is a win-win for all. Some of the students go on to work at Best Buy and the Geek Squad.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? Continue teaching at the college level, take some U of M extension courses, travel the world and seek out a winter lifestyle location, keep very active physically (golfing, pickleball, trail walking, water aerobics, wave walking, biking), volunteer, and invest in my millions! :)

Kim Durand, 2015

Teacher, Burnsville Alternative High School

Kim has been serving students in District 191 for 7 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career? The most rewarding experience was helping create and teach in the EL Newcomers Program at BAHS. My students were new to the country with limited English language skills. They quickly became a close-knit group, adjusting to life in MN and school taught in English. They amazed me with their hard work and perseverance. Many earned their diplomas and continued their education or began careers. It is heartwarming to now hear from former students about how their experience at BAHS helped prepare them for college or careers.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? You might find me enjoying time with family, friends and nature. I plan to do things that make me smile. I'll volunteer in my grandson's class and probably get a new puppy.

Holly Foldenaur, 2004

Teacher, Burnsville High School

Holly has been serving students in District 191 for 17 years.



Lori Haggerty, 1994

**Community Education Coordinator,
Diamondhead Education Center**

Lori has been serving students in District 191 for 28 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of

your career? Being a part of the introduction and growth of Early Childhood Pre-Kindergarten Programs in the elementary schools.

Favorite One91 story? My favorite story is having a former preschool student years later ask me at an open house for new families if I was "The Mrs. Lori" she had as a preschool student at Cedar School. I said, "Well, what is your name because I certainly don't recognize you." As soon as she told me her name, I remembered her and her mother. I also have great stories of families who I was fortunate to have been all of their children's preschool teacher over the years.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? My plans for retirement are spending time at the cabin with family and friends and traveling with my best friend/husband!

Susan Hovland, 1988

Teacher, Edward Neill Elementary

Sue has been serving students in District 191 for 34 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of

your career? The most rewarding experiences of my career have been working with amazing groups of staff and children at Neill Elementary. All of my 34 years in the district have been at Neill, and there's a reason for that!

Favorite One91 story? Some of my favorite stories would be about how former students come back to visit and reminisce about their memories at Neill. Another favorite thing is having children in my class of FORMER students! Yep, it dates me!

What do you plan to do in your retirement? I plan to spend more time with my family and friends, travel, volunteer, perhaps binge a few shows on Netflix! There will be numerous opportunities for adventure!

Heidi Knutsen, 1988

**Community Education Coordinator,
Vista View Elementary**

Heidi has been serving students in District 191 for 34 years.



Cynthia Lamb, 1987

Teacher, Edward Neill Elementary

Cynthia has been serving students in District 191 for 35 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career? Most rewarding is seeing students understand and to work with wonderful team members - not just one time.

Favorite One91 story? I had a child in my reading group who was a master at avoidance. One day he settled down and actually did the silent reading he was assigned. He yelled out "Oh My Gosh!" We were all startled and asked what was the matter. He said with wide eyes, "I just learned something!"

What do you plan to do in your retirement? My husband and I plan to spend winters in Arizona. I also hope to spend more time with my grandchildren.

Donald Leake, 1988

Principal, Virtual Academy

Don has been serving students in District 191 for 34 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career? The most rewarding experience has been the opportunity to work with students and staff from across the district. Students are the focus and as a teacher, coach and administrator I have had the pleasure of helping many students find a means to success. Teachers are the number one influence on student learning and as an instructional leader.

I take pride in guiding teachers to be the best they can be for the students.

Favorite One91 story? I have worked with so many wonderful students and awesome staff members to pick just one. I was fortunate to be able to coach with Dick Hanson and Neal Jeppson for several years and 2 state championships. I had the pleasure of working at all three junior high schools, and then the Virtual Academy. I loved teaching woodworking to 9 th graders, helping them design their own project and teaching them how to make it a reality. I loved working with new teachers as they learned their craft and developed as teachers.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? I plan to do some work on our house in order to sell it and move south. From there, it will be time to play with my old cars and get back into woodworking.

Sarah Levinski, 2016

Teacher, Burnsville High School

Sarah has been serving students in District 191 for 6 years.



Patricia Maternowski, 1999

**Administrative Assistant,
Diamondhead Education Center**

Patty has been serving students in District 191 for 22 years.



Brigid McCarthy, 1997

**Student Systems Coordinator,
Diamondhead Education Center**

Brigid has been serving students in District 191 for 25 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of

your career? This is a difficult question to answer. There isn't just one rewarding experience. A culmination of 24 ½ years of amazing experiences. One of the most memorable highlights, though, was being involved in the planning of many graduation ceremonies at the Burnsville Alternative High School. Seeing the students' joy and pride as they walked across the stage knowing the barriers and struggles they often faced, always brought tears to my eyes. I am very proud to have been a part of the BAHS staff.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? Spend as much time with my grandchildren and family as I can. Travel, substitute teach and pursue my creative and entrepreneurial side. I have a passion for antiquing and collecting fine china and pottery. I create new purpose for my treasures. They are "Gracefully Refined" (the name of my business)!

Norine Moulsoff, 1989

Teacher, Burnsville High School

Norine has been serving students in District 191 for 33 years.



Cynthia Nepsund, 1987

Teacher, Virtual Academy

Cynthia has been serving students in District 191 for nearly 36 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career?

I've always had an interest in art. In a 1:1 meeting with my administrator many years back, we were talking about how to make our school look and feel more student-friendly. We wanted a place that would celebrate the uniqueness of each individual and it was here a dream began. With the help of a parent volunteer, I was able to teach each classroom how to draw a self portrait. Students drew themselves and accurately colored their personal attributes. A brightly-colored frame was added to complete their personal piece. Once each student was finished, the portraits were sent off to a company that reproduced them onto tiles that would eventually become the statement wall at Gideon Pond. To this day, it makes me smile because it truly shows the beauty of our diversity and individual characteristics.

Favorite One91 story? There was a program called "The Neighborhood" at Gideon Pond. The program included one first-grade class, two fourth-grade classes and one fifth-grade class. Students received age appropriate instruction but also had times in their day that were spent in a multiage setting. Students interacted like they did in neighborhoods, where the kids hung out with one another regardless of their age. They put together a school-wide initiative to understand the question, "how much is a million?" The school collected pop tabs and "The Neighborhood" counted each and every one until they reached a million. The students were amazed to see that one million pop tabs filled 10 of the custodial denim bags used to collect the school garbage. It was fun to watch the kids hunched around a table counting together, organizing piles of hundreds, then thousands, then ten thousands, etc. We learned how to organize, systemize and eventually visualize what one MILLION looks like. It's a whole lot!!!

What do you plan to do in your retirement? As aforementioned, I enjoy art. I want to get my hands busy creating. I look forward to a more relaxed pace that includes plenty of time for family, grandbabies, friends and travel.

Jeff Nepsund, 1990

Principal, Vista View Elementary

Jeff has been serving students in District 191 for 32 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career?

The first thing that came to mind was the incredible privilege and experience it was to be on the design team for Harriet Bishop Elementary School the year before it opened. As a team, we spent many hours developing a multi-age program for the newest elementary school in the district, under the direction of Dr. Sally Willason. We visited sites throughout the metro that were doing multi-age education, and we helped choose the interior design, color scheme, and furniture. We held neighborhood coffees to share our vision with stakeholders and parents whose children would attend Harriet Bishop. When we opened that fall we started a tradition of holding a neighborhood parade to say, "We are starting the school year - celebrate with us!" It was the most rewarding experience of my career.

Favorite One91 story? I guess this may not necessarily be a favorite story, but it is my favorite thing to reflect on when I think about my career in education. We truly never know who we may have impacted or how much we may have impacted our students. When I announced my retirement, I received an email from a former third grader, who is now in his late 20s, extending his congratulations. It meant a lot to hear from him and read how he enjoyed being in my class. I know I have been greatly impacted by the students I have had the honor to serve for the last 32 years. I am very proud of my time in District 191, both as a teacher and a principal.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? At the time of this writing, I am waiting for grandchild number 1! And baby number 2 is due in June! By the time you read this, I will be a grandpa! I plan to be a grandpa and spend as much time as I can with my grandchildren. I will get back on my bike and put on a lot of miles. I plan to hike and maybe try an overnight backpacking trip! It has always been a dream of mine to get out to Maine the first fall after I retire. I have already begun to investigate and plan for fall of 2022! And, maybe my wife and I can finally celebrate our November anniversary in a proper manner. Why did two people in education get married in November? I will receive my Educational Doctorate degree in May, and I plan to continue in the education field by teaching administrative licensure courses to educators working on becoming principals. I couldn't be more excited about what's next!

Teresa Ostdiek, 1988

Teacher, Sky Oaks Elementary

Teresa has been serving students in District 191 for 34 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career?

I love it when my students come back and visit me, find me on social media, send me a letter through the US mail or run into me throughout the community! I have also been rewarded when students stay connected with me and ask to come back and help out in the classroom, as they have chosen to go into teaching and need to return to the classroom to fulfill hours for their education field. It has been a wonderful experience to watch my students grow up, become adults and parents, work a job or choose to go onto post secondary school. Most of all, it's wonderful to see students become responsible, respectful and caring adult people!

Favorite One91 story? I have many ... as I think back to teaching first grade virtually last year, it definitely left me with some unique, fun stories! It was actually an experience that I never ever pictured myself doing, but it was truly an experience that I will never forget!

What do you plan to do in your retirement? I have been thinking all about what will I do with my life when I grow up ... becoming a teacher was very natural for me as I have always felt very comfortable and loved being around kids of all ages. After I leave the classroom, I have thought about many of my options and they are truly endless as I love to be busy and have a routine. Yet, I am so excited about having more flexibility with my time, my husband and my adult kids, along with spending more time with other family & friends. This will be an ideal time to do some more exploring to figure out what's next. One of my long-term goals has been to create and establish my own small business which has inspired me to start ReFresh & ReDesign Home Staging Co. It's exactly what the name states, as I want to help others create, refresh & redesign their living or work spaces. Overall, I feel very fortunate as I am at the age to enjoy more life and best of all have time to do it! Thank you ISD191 for being a part of my life for the past 34 years and helping me become who I am today! "Life is a Journey" and I am still on it.

Barbara Payne, 1997

Educational Assistant, BEST

Barbara has been serving students in District 191 for 25 years.



Thomas Robison, 1987

Teacher, Gideon Pond Elementary

Thomas has been serving students in District 191 for 25 years.

What was the most rewarding experience of your career? Working in the same district that I attended as a student.



Pam Schilling, 1988

Teacher, Sky Oaks Elementary

Pam has been serving students in District 191 for 34 years.

What was the most rewarding experience of your career? This district provided many opportunities to involve students in life changing experiences that created memories and solidified learning. I had the privilege of leading the following rewarding experiences during my career in ISD 191: Shakespeare plays, grade-level productions/jump rope programs, science fairs, student council, Veterans Day programs, hands-on science investigation, fundraising projects and overnight trips to Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center. The personal investment each student made by being engaged is the most rewarding experience of my career. The memories last forever. Thank you ISD 191!



Favorite One91 story? A favorite story for me took place at Eagle Bluff. One 5th-grade trip, at 24 degrees below zero, we were able to fulfill a wish of one of our students who had been recently diagnosed with cancer. He wanted to successfully complete the

high ropes course. It was dangerously cold and we were advised to not participate in the high ropes course. With the help of superb chaperoning parents and encouraging classmates, he did it! Though Matt is no longer with us, his memory of perseverance and overcoming will always be with me.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? We plan to travel and be spontaneous all year long! My husband and I also plan to spend the summer at our new lake home enjoying fishing with our Minnesota grandkids and traveling to California every January - March, spending time with our California grandkids.

Wayne 'Mick' Scholl, 1987

Teacher, Nicollet Middle School

Mick has been serving students in District 191 for 35 years.

What was the most rewarding experience of your career? The relationships built over my career with families, students and staff.

Favority One91 story? When I taught DAPE, I had a wrestling unit that I called All-Star Wrestling! Each one of my students had a walk-out song. I had a spotlight shinning on them as they walked or rolled through a make shift tunnel onto the mat. The champion had a champion belt and got to wear it all week until the next match. To enhance their experience, another teacher had a dry ice machine "smoke." Why not?! I hooked it up and pointed it at the end of the tunnel where the students came out. The very last student, the champion, came through the tunnel and jumped on the mat holding the belt. Ultimately, the school fire alarm went off, emptying the whole school because of the ice machine! :)

What do you plan to do in your retirement? Spend more time with my grandchild, volunteer at church, travel, and get to all these projects around the house.



Dawn Simpson, 2014

**Educational Assistant,
William Byrne Elementary**

Dawn has been serving students in District 191 for 8 years.



Kelly Smith, 1988

Teacher, Districtwide

Kelly has been serving students in District 191 for 33 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career?

There is nothing more rewarding than staying in touch with former students and knowing that you made a difference in their lives. Also, I worked with incredible people and on amazing teams. So, on the top of the list are the students and colleagues I worked with throughout the years. Being a part of the team that planned for and opened Harriet Bishop was a rewarding time in my career. It meant a lot of long hours and hard work, but being a part of a school's history is pretty awesome.

Favority One91 story? A memorable story was when I was teaching 5th grade at Sky Oaks. In the spring of 1994, there was a terrible fire at BHS. Enough damage was done to the building that classes had to be relocated for the remainder of the year. In less than a week, a plan was put into place to have the high school students attend classes at Sky Oaks and Nicollet. So, from 6-11 a.m. the high school kids went to school and from 12-5 p.m. the Sky Oaks and Nicollet students went to school. My classroom was high school math in the morning and 5th grade in the afternoon. On the first "joint" day the students wrote notes to the high school students who might be sitting at their desk. They were thrilled to see that the high school students had written back! This was the start of weeks (and in some cases, years) of pen pals that created more excitement than I could have imagined. It was pretty amazing to see the flexibility, responsiveness and generosity our school community displayed that spring...we made it work.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? I will spend time with my grandson doing whatever he wants to do! My husband and I will do some traveling and spend time at our cabin. I hope to get together with friends, read, volunteer, go for walks...then see what comes next.

Diane Terfehr, 2012

Educational Assistant, Gideon Pond Elementary

Diane has been serving students in District 191 for 10 years.



Loralie Van Der Woude, 1990

Teacher, Burnsville High School

Lori has been serving students in District 191 for 32 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career? I love when students come back after graduating and tell me about life experiences that they have had related to their personal health. It makes me remember that I have had a positive impact on their lives.

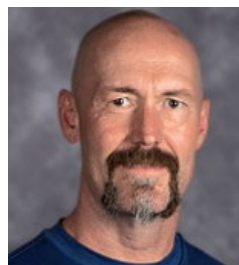
Favorite One91 story? I don't really have a favorite story but my favorite years of teaching was when my own children were at BHS. It was fun to see them and their friends everyday and surprisingly neither of my children minded going to high school with both of their parents!

What do you plan to do in your retirement? I love to travel and plan to spend time with my husband going on many adventures.

Mark Van Der Woude, 1989

Teacher, Burnsville High School

Mark has been serving students in District 191 for 33 years.



Ruthann White, 2001

**Educational Assistant, Burnsville
Alternative High School**

Ruthanne has been serving students in District 191 for 22 years.



What was the most rewarding experience of your career?
Teaching a student not to be afraid of the pool.

What do you plan to do in your retirement? I plan on starting a new career as an assistant manager for Jockey International.

Joanna Willenburg, 2001

**Administrative Assistant, Early
Childhood Special Education -
Diamondhead**

Joanna has been serving students in District 191 for 21 years.



Jane Wittenkeller, 1997

Nurse, Edward Neill Elementary

Jane has been serving students in District 191 for 25 years.

What do you plan to do in your retirement?
Relax, travel, spend more time with family, friends, and grandchildren.



Nicholas Wolf, 1993

Teacher, Burnsville High School

Nick has been serving students in District 191 for 28 years.



Carolyn Workman, 2007

Teacher, Burnsville High School

Carolyn has been serving students in District 191 for 15 years.



Thank you, retirees,
for your combined 953
years of service to
Burnsville-Eagan-Savage
School District 191!