

BRYAN SCHOENING

Seems like just yesterday that Bryan Schoening was playing basketball in the Sidney Middle School gym for the Red Raiders (#44) and this fall, he will begin a new adventure as the West Elementary Principal. Bryan is a 2009 graduate of Sidney High School and is proud to be raising his children in the same small town he grew up in. Although he was born in Grand Island, he has called Sidney home since he was in 1st grade. He is a coach, sponsor for the Sidney Raider Anglers, and has been a math teacher at the high school since 2014. He and his wife Brooke have two children and a lot of passion and love for this town.

Bryan played football and basketball for the Raiders. He has many great memories from his time as a Raider and proudly informed me, "we got 3rd place at State Basketball my senior year!" He told me he wanted to be a teacher since his senior year of high school. He said, "I had some great teachers and I enjoyed math class, so I wanted to be a math teacher. Mr. Schiessler showed me what a really good Geometry teacher was like, and I wanted to be able to teach a difficult subject like Geometry well like he did. He was amazing! Senior year I was able to participate in a student teaching program at the high school and I was able to help out in Mrs. Sylvester's class and Mrs. King's classrooms at West; and that solidified my decision to become a teacher." He smiled and said, "I know the important impact that my teachers made on my life and I wanted to be able to make that same difference with my students one day."

Bryan attended Chadron State College and graduated with a degree in Mathematics Education in December of 2013. He met his wife Brooke during his time at Chadron State College. They married in June 2015, and together they have two wonderful children - Zella will be attending PreK at Central and Case is 2 years old. Bryan smiled and said, "Zella was playing in the gym and told Brooke and I that she will play volleyball in this gym one day!" Knowing this is where they will raise their children, that is most likely a true fact and as quickly as time flies, it will be her time to play in that gym as a high school athlete all too soon.

After graduating from Chadron, Bryan had an opportunity to student teach in Omaha at Creighton Preparatory Academy. It was a great experience and is an incredible school but Bryan got a call from his high school basketball coach, who is now our Superintendent of Sidney Public Schools, asking what his plans were. That call led to an interview in May 2013 and that interview turned out to be his ticket to being that "amazing Geometry teacher" that he wanted to be.

Bryan started at Sidney High School in the spring of 2014 as a high school math teacher and coach. His first year he volunteered as an assistant 8th grade boys basketball coach. The next school year he was hired as a freshman boys basketball coach and assistant varsity coach. He did that for 2 years before moving to coach JV boys and still maintained his assistant varsity coach spot. Currently, he is in his 4th year as a middle school boys basketball coach and likes this age of athletes. He enjoyed building relationships with the kids before he taught them in the classroom in high school. Even though he will be moving into a new job, he will continue to coach middle school boys basketball. "It will be a role reversal and I will be able to build relationships with the kids at West and then have an opportunity to coach them in middle school, so that will be different, but good. I want to focus on quality relationships and the value of hard work. Those are the things that stick with me from my time as a Raider athlete. Coach Ehler

always found a way to get us to work hard and work together. I just want to make an impact on kids the way my teachers and coaches did for me.”

In 2017, Bryan earned his Masters in Education Administration degree from Chadron State College. He sought this degree with the intention that it may open some doors for his future. He was happy at Sidney High School but thought “2021 is a good time for me to take the next step in my career. West Elementary has a great staff and I think it’s a good spot for me to be. I walked out of there 20 years ago as a 6th grader and 20 years later, I am walking back in as a new principal, that’s pretty cool! Brooke’s grandpa was the superintendent of St. Pat’s and had the same office that I will now be able to use. That makes this role a little more special. I am excited for the opportunity to be at West Elementary. When you are there, you can feel the family environment and it’s a positive place to be!”

Bryan also commented on the relationships teachers have with the students there, “they work hard to build good relationships, again, it all comes down to the relationships. Those are so important. I want to learn from them and am excited to be working with a new age group. I don’t intend to change much because there’s nothing wrong with the way it’s working now.”

One thing he will be continuing at Sidney High School is being the sponsor of the Sidney Raider Anglers Club that he started this past year. A student came to him and asked about starting a fishing club. Bryan has always loved to hunt, fish, and be outdoors, so this was a natural fit for him. The club was sponsored by Cabela’s/Bass Pro, who donated rods, reels, and tackle. They did have one angler compete in the state tournament in McCook last weekend. This year there were 16 anglers in the club and they will hopefully continue to grow. Bryan commented, “this is a great place for kids who may not be in other activities. I know kids have a lot of things going on, but if you like fishing and being outdoors and have some time to fit us in, we would love to have you join us next year!”

Bryan and Brooke love it here and they are proud to be members of our community. “The way Sidney came through everything that 2020 threw at us was inspirational. We continued to work hard and although everything outside of the classroom seemed to change, the way we worked together and focused on being strong educators didn’t change. Our town is resilient and we have seen hard times before and have risen to the challenge and I know we will continue to do that.”

Thank you Bryan and Brooke for your dedication to Sidney Public Schools and our amazing community. We are glad you chose Sidney and came back “home” to raise your family and help bring a positive impact to so many others!