

"I sort of fell into teaching." That honest reflection captures the beginning of Ms. Robins' journey into education. After deciding to change careers, she applied for a position as a library assistant at a college. Instead, she was offered a modified role that included teaching remedial math to students preparing for college-level coursework. That unexpected opportunity changed everything. "I fell in love with teaching." Since beginning her career in 2008 at South Royalton School, she has built a classroom grounded in high expectations, care, and consistency.

At White River Valley High School, what Ms. Robins values most is the team around her. "I work with the most incredible staff. I could not be successful in my position without the support and dedication of the people I have the honor of working with every day." She also thrives on the dynamic nature of teaching. "No two days are the same. Some days are easy, and I go home smiling about something a student said or something that happened in class. Some days are incredibly challenging, and I go home exhausted and contemplative about those challenges." For her, the work extends far beyond academics. "Teaching is so much more than delivering content."

One of her proudest moments came the year after COVID disruptions, when the senior class dedicated the yearbook to her with the words, "For all the work she did to help us get through a year like no other." That recognition meant a great deal. "All I wanted that year for all of us was a little bit of normal." Long after students graduate, she continues to feel the impact of those relationships. "I love hearing from kids after they graduate," she says, whether they are sharing pride in a strong college math grade or even asking for help with homework. "I just feel honored when they reach out to me."

Students often describe Ms. Robins as tough, and she embraces that reputation. "I know that first impressions of me are often that I am a tough teacher. I own that proudly." Her expectations are intentional and rooted in belief. "I want my students to reach their potential. I want them to learn that being challenged is an opportunity to build persistence and grit." While students may not use every formula they learn, she hopes they leave with something lasting. "They may not have to find the zeros of a polynomial in their lives after high school or college, but they will hopefully have taken the lessons they learned about problem solving and reasoning with them for the long term."

If asked to describe herself in three words, she offers tough, organized, and helpful. Students might also add that she thinks she is funny. "I do love a good dad joke or pun," she admits, even if students deny laughing. Beyond her classroom, Ms. Robins serves on the high school leadership team, takes notes at faculty meetings, coordinates the high school Facebook page, and helps organize climate events. She is also an advisor for the senior class and a teacher advisor for a group of ninth graders. Outside of school, she enjoys crafting, reading, painting acrylics on canvas, playing video games on the Xbox her son passed down to her, and solving Sudoku puzzles. Despite what one might assume, she clarifies, "I do not go home and do math problems." She also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Engineering, a fact that often surprises people.

This year, her guiding theme is accountability. "Trust and respect are built on consistency and honesty," she explains. She believes accountability applies to adults as much as students. "Who I am as a teacher and as a person is up to me. I am accountable for my every word and my every action. I take that pretty seriously." Her advice to students and families reflects that mindset. "Do not be afraid of challenges. It is all part of the learning process. Learning how to respond to challenges is such an important part of life."

Please join us in celebrating Ms. Robins for her dedication, steady leadership, and the meaningful impact she continues to make on students at White River Valley High School.