

A large, stylized red letter 'W' with a white outline, set against a black background.

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR

Bethany Kneser

From a young age, Bethany Kneser knew exactly what she wanted to be—a teacher. While other children dreamed of becoming doctors or athletes, she was busy “playing school,” crafting lessons on her whiteboard and grading pretend assignments. That early love of helping others learn grew into a lifelong passion for education and a career that has inspired students for more than two decades.

For the past 21 years, Bethany has taught Health and Physical Education in the Howards Grove School District, where she’s known for creating a classroom culture built on connection, trust, and encouragement. She believes that understanding her students as individuals—learning about their interests, passions, and goals—is the foundation of meaningful education. You’ll often find her cheering in the stands at her students’ games or attending their performances, showing her support both inside and outside the classroom.

Bethany brings creativity and energy to every lesson, incorporating project-based learning that empowers students to take ownership of their education. Whether designing fitness plans, creating health awareness campaigns, or tackling real-world issues, her students learn to think critically, collaborate, and apply their knowledge in ways that matter.

A lifelong learner herself, Bethany continually seeks new ways to grow as an educator, attending workshops, collaborating with colleagues, and modeling a healthy, balanced lifestyle for her students.

When asked what motivates her, her answer is simple: her students. Watching them discover their strengths and grow into confident, capable young adults fuels her passion every day. As both a teacher and a parent, she’s driven by a deep desire to create the same kind of supportive, inspiring environment she hopes for her own children.

Recently, she extended her commitment to service beyond the classroom by founding the Howards Grove Service Club, which connects students with volunteer opportunities in their community. In just its first month, the club grew to more than 50 members, all eager to make a difference.

Upon learning she’d been named a WEA Member Benefits Outstanding Educator, Bethany described feeling “an overwhelming sense of gratitude and humility.” For her, teaching has never been about recognition. It’s about relationships, growth, and helping students realize what they’re capable of achieving.

“I’ve always known that being a teacher is what I was meant to do,” she says. And after 21 years of inspiring students to live healthier, happier, and more confident lives, it’s clear that Bethany Kneser is right where she’s meant to be.