



OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR

Brittany Vanderbilt

Inspired by her mom, also a teacher, Brittany Vanderbilt knew from an early age that she wanted to become a teacher too. The only question was what she would teach. A high school Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) teacher encouraged her to consider FCS, and it turned out to be the perfect fit, combining her love of cooking, sewing, and teaching life skills.

Now in her 19th year of teaching, Brittany teaches FCS to students in grades 7–12, focusing on culinary arts, sewing, and child development.

For Brittany, building relationships is one of the most important parts of teaching. She works to create a classroom where students feel safe, welcome, and comfortable being themselves. Sometimes it's the little things, like offering a student a cup of tea or taking a few minutes to ask about their day. She also loves hands-on activities that let students be creative, work together, and have fun while learning.

One of the most rewarding parts of Brittany's career has been working with aspiring educators. She loves hearing from former students after graduation and getting updates about their own classrooms. Seeing them follow their passion for education and knowing she got to be a small part of their journey is especially meaningful.

Even after nearly two decades in the classroom, Brittany believes there is always something new to learn. She enjoys professional development, especially summer culinary workshops, and connecting with other FCS teachers to share ideas and resources. She's also learned that when she's excited about what she's teaching, her students pick up on that energy, making learning more enjoyable for everyone.

As a mom, Brittany often thinks about the school experience she wants for her own daughter and strives to provide that for her students: a place where they feel valued, supported, and cared for.

That mindset also shapes how Brittany defines student success. It isn't always about getting the highest grade or being the best at something. Sometimes it's the "aha!" moment in the culinary lab when something finally clicks, the excitement of figuring out how to use a sewing machine, or simply finding the confidence to try something new.

Brittany is proud of the relationships she has built with students and of creating a classroom that can be both calm and exciting. She hopes her students leave FCS with practical skills, confidence to try new things, and positive memories.

Outside the classroom, Brittany is the Fashion Club advisor and co-advisor for the Junior Class. She also coached volleyball for 15 years and Forensics for 10 years. When she's not at school, she loves traveling, gardening, and spending time with her daughter, Delilah, and her husband and high school sweetheart, Jesse. And one more important thing to know about Brittany: she is a HUGE Gilmore Girls fan!