

OUTSTANDING *EDUCATOR*

Alex Schremp

Alex's path to the classroom took a detour, in the best way. A UW-Madison graduate with a degree in Personal Finance, he spent about three years as a financial advisor in the private sector before feeling a calling to teach younger people about their finances. That led to a second career as a high school business educator.

Now in his eighth year of teaching, Alex mainly teaches Personal Finance. He connects with students by letting them into his life and the experiences he's had. "The more truthful and forthcoming you can be with students, the more they realize how much you care." He takes to heart the idea that students learn best from teachers they like and respect, and that they need to know you care about them, not just the content, before they'll learn from you.

Seeing each student grow is Alex's favorite part of the job. Personal Finance can have a major impact on young people's lives, and hearing success stories from former students, especially how his class helped set them up for financial success, is "such a gift." For Alex, success looks like students using what they've learned right away, whether that's building an emergency fund or opening a Roth IRA.

Alex keeps growing by remembering that every student has a unique story and path. "What might have worked in a previous year may not work with your current set of students." Empathy helps him adapt to whatever comes his way. The students also keep him going. Their enthusiasm and excitement make every day both a challenge and a reward, and "you can't help but come to work energized when you see that level of passion."

With about 150 Personal Finance students each semester, Alex has reached nearly 2,500 students since his career began. "I am grateful to have a platform that hopefully makes a positive change in so many students' lives by the end of my career."

Outside the classroom, Alex has coached girls' and boys' high school golf for the past eight years. He's also been a proud DECA advisor for just as long, helping students learn real-world business skills. His chapter runs four student-run businesses that generate income for the club, and it's the only chapter in the world with four different businesses. At home, he loves spending time with his wife and their two kids, Lucy and Cal.

Alex says he felt "truly humbled" when he learned he'd been named an Outstanding Educator. "I have had the privilege of working with numerous educators throughout the state in various organizations and know all the great work they do, both in and out of the classroom. To be included with a group of educators who have received this award … is a true honor."

Above all, Alex hopes his students know he cares. "No matter what is going on in their life, I want students to know that they have an adult who is in their corner and cares for them as a person and not just a student."