

# OUTSTANDING *EDUCATOR*

## Kari Adams

Growing up in a family of educators, Kari always felt like teaching was a calling. She loved learning and genuinely can't remember a time when she wanted to do anything else. Now in her 27th year as an educator, Kari serves as a library technology specialist for 7th and 8th grade students.

For Kari, the library is more than a place to find a good book. She works to make it a welcoming space where students want to be and can find whatever kind of support they need. On any given day, that might mean helping a student find a book, troubleshoot technology issues, get academic support, or try something new through 3D printing, coding, or video editing.

One of Kari's favorite parts of teaching is helping students become creators rather than just consumers of information. Through project-based learning, she encourages students to take what they're learning and turn it into something of their own, whether that's a podcast, movie, interactive display, or another creative project. Along the way, students build practical technology skills while deepening their understanding of what they're learning.

Working in library technology means Kari is constantly learning, too. As curriculum changes and new tools emerge, she makes it a priority to learn new technologies so she can help both students and colleagues use them successfully. That same curiosity is something she hopes to pass along to her students.

Kari is motivated by the responsibility she has to help prepare students with the skills they'll need in the future. One of her favorite parts of being an educator is running into former students and hearing about where life has taken them. She's especially proud of creating a library where students and staff feel supported and valued.

To Kari, student success doesn't look the same for everyone. It might be academic growth, social growth, or a student discovering confidence they didn't have before. What matters is the progress each student makes from where they started.

That belief carries into what she hopes students remember long after they leave her library: stay curious. Keep wondering, trying new things, and learning how to do something new. She wants students to know it's good to push themselves because they're capable of more than they may think.

Being named an Outstanding Educator left Kari feeling both surprised and humbled. She sees the recognition as a reflection of more than her own work. It represents the important work happening throughout her school and the students and colleagues who make the library program what it is every day.

Outside of the library, Kari also serves as a Student Government advisor, working alongside student leaders who build school spirit while giving their time and resources to local charities and community organizations.